Akashic Records of the Bastard Magical Instructor

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ロクでなし魔術講師と禁忌教典

アカシックレコード

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CONTENTS

005 — 序章 無職なボクが魔術の非常勤講師になったワケ
017 — 第一章 やる気のない非常勤講師
066 — 第二章 子猫と子犬
118 — 第三章 ほんの少しのやる気
168 — 第四章 日常の崩落、過去の残滓
218 — 第五章 愚者と黒い死神
269 — 第六章 無職だったボクのやる気が皆無だったワケ
312 — 終章 無職なボクが魔術の講師になったワケ
323 — あとがき

The record is wise and all–knowing. It creates and grasps everything.
For that reason, it will most likely
Guide humanity towards the path of destruction——.

"The Sky Fortress of Melgarius" by Rolan·Eltoria

Akashic Record of the Bastard Magic Instructor

Prologue: The Reason I became a Temporary Magic Instructor, even though I'm Unemployed

On a certain morning of a certain incident—

"How should I say this? You could say that I firmly believe that 'I'll lose to myself if I choose to work'."

The man, Glen, proudly made this statement. His expression could be likened to that of a saint that had journeyed the world and found enlightenment. Contrary to his expression however, he was leaning forward on the desk in front of him, and lazily resting his chin on the palm of his hand, though he made sure to maintain eye–contact with the young lady sitting across from him.

"Though, I get to live thanks to you. It's fortunate that I have you as a friend."

The lady sitting across Glen gracefully crossed her legs, and casually sipped on her tea.

"Hmm, is that so? Then you can go ahead and die, you pig"

The lips of the lady had been spouting insults, curved into a refined smile.

"Ahaha~! Isn't that a bit cruel, Serika? … Ah, can I get a refill?"

Despite her harsh remarks, Glen continued to laugh indifferently, and placed his empty bowl directly in front of the lady named Serika.

"You're as carefree as usual, aren't you?"

Serika's expression seemed distant for a brief moment, but was quickly recomposed to her usual smile.

"Normally speaking, a person who doesn't do anything should be a bit more shameful when freeloading at someone else's home."

“Ah, speaking of which, breakfast this morning was a bit salty for my tastes. I prefer lighter–tasting foods you know?”

“And you are even picky what’s given to you, I don’t even know what to do with you anymore.”

Serika retained her passive smile for another moment—

“<Whatever·Just·Explode>”

And inadvertently used her reply as the chant for a three–stage spell incantation.

In the next moment, the room was enveloped by a deafening roar, and the surroundings were covered by the crimson–red explosion. The attacking phenomenon that resulted from Serika’s incantation blew Glen away, and promptly destroyed most of the luxurious cafeteria, which tables had been neatly arranged with expensive utensils a moment ago.

“Y–, You bastard! Are you trying to kill me!?”

Glen – whose body had been charred black by the explosion – continuously coughed as he complained.

“Kill you? It seems that you’re a bit mistaken. After all, the act of cleaning up rubbish should be seen as a service to the community. Do you understand what I’m saying, Glen?”

“Don’t use that motherly tone to say such cruel things! You should at least treat me like an actual person!”

To Glen’s continued rebuttals, Serika could only sag her shoulders and sigh.

In contrast to Glen, who was considered a degenerate of society, Serika could only be described as a cool and composed beauty.

Based on her appearance, one would say that she was around twenty years old. Her glamourous wheat–colored hair looks as if the sunset constantly shined upon it, and her eyes were a shade of deep crimson red that was becoming of blood. If one were to look closely, her pretty appearance would make one shiver, and her walking appearance looked as if she was faintly floating. Combined with her strangely flirtatious personality, she seemed to be a mystical existence. Her

slim hands and feet, and her tender limbs made it seem as if her body was finely sculpted. Simply put, her body was perfect even from a skeptical female's perspective. She wore a black formal gown, which – while exuding an elegant aura – revealed enough of her chest and had a waistband for fair measure, as to further emphasize her curvature.

Despite her impressive and charming appearance, the person in question also carried the absolute presence and demeanor that was necessary to maintain such an image. That's why the lady named Serika seemed like an existence that was detached from the world. Her classy demeanor and concentrated conduct was that of a noble's. That said, the master of the mansion – which size was comparable to a small mountain – is evidently Serika; and Glen was merely a freeloader.

To anyone, the societal positions of the two seemed abundantly clear at first glance.

"Back on topic, Glen… isn't it about time to start looking for job?"

Serika's deep crimson eyes gazed towards Glen, who sat on the floor.

Glen – who was about to get up – suddenly froze in place.

"Since you quit your last job, you've been living here for over a year, and each and every day all you do is eat and sleep, sleep and eat, living a meaningless life doing nothing in particular. Don't you think you're wasting your precious time?"

Hearing Serika's statement regarding his life, Glen valiantly stuck out his chest, and replied to Serika without a hint of self-doubt.

"There's no problem, I like it this way anyway. I mean, compared to when I was just an expiring cog in the machine of society, this life is way better you know!?"

"What kind of comparison do you have to make for your freeloading lifestyle to be the lesser evil? Glen, as a favor to me, why don't you go and die somewhere?"

"Hm, why are you treating me like an outsider? Is the bond between you and I not tight enough?"

"*<Return this to the providence of the cycle·Let the five elements return to its five elements·To unweave the…>*"

“Oi!? Isn’t that the chant for ‘Extinction Ray’!? W-Wait, Hold up! You can use anything but this! I’ll turn to dust you know!? Noooooooooo—!?”

Glen retreated as far away as he could from Serika, and screeched in fright with his back pressed to the wall.

Serika gazed at Glen’s pitiful and shameless appearance, and quickly canceled her magic. She was convinced that it would be crude and foolish to personally attend to such matters.

“Well, this’ll do I suppose. To use magic to deal with someone like you would be a sacrilege in itself. Doing that would be like using a legendary sword to crush a cockroach.”

“That’s a bit much don’t cha’ think? You’re being disrespectful to cockroaches all around the world.”

“That’s what you have a problem about!? It seems like you at least have a bit of self-awareness, but your personality is still terrible!”

As if she was tired of this bout, Serika lowered her head.

“Well, in short, I think it’s about time for you to consider your future. You can’t always stay like this wasting your time away. You already understand this don’t you?”

Even Glen wasn’t able to mess around any longer, since he could tell that Serika was genuinely worried for him.

“Even if you say that…if I start working now…what kind of work can I even do?”

Glen’s slanted glance made him look as if he was making another childish bet.

“I knew you would say that, so I’ve prepared a suitable job for you.”

“A job?”

“Yes. Actually, it just so happens that there is an open position for lecturer at Alzano Magic Academy.”

“Magic Academy?”

Puzzled, Glen furrowed his brows.

“Since the previous lecturer had suddenly left due to a personal affair, we

haven’t been to find a replacement yet, so, I want you to take the vacant position as a temporary lecturer.”

“Wait a sec, why do you have to ask me for this kind of thing? Doesn’t that academy have a lot of professors with time to spare? So why can’t you just ask one of them to be the temporary lecturer?”

“Ah, don’t say that. Our group of professors are currently busy preparing for the Imperial Assembly of Magic Academies that is taking place near the capital. It’s truly a shame, but we currently do not have the resources to properly care for the students.”

“Ah–, now that you talk about it it’s almost time for that again isn’t it?”

“Basically, you’ll act as a substitute instructor for one month, and your wages will determined based on the standard salary of an official instructor. Furthermore, based on your performance as an instructor in the coming month, the academy may consider hiring you as an official instructor. The conditions aren’t bad at all. So, what do you say?”

The conditions for hire were spectacular to say to least, yet Glen carried an anxious expression.

“Hmm…”

He put away his indifferent look, took a deep breath, looked out the window.

“…It’s impossible I guess.”

Through the window, Glen gazed at a faraway place.

The morning sky was a brilliant and clear shade of blue. From the window, one could oversee the pointed rooftops of the architecture on the streets, which gave of the impression of antiquity. —Furthermore, the streets served to glorify the giant and semi-transparent ancient city that floated in the air.

The name of this mighty city of old was ‘The Sky Castle of Melgarius’.

–As the symbol of the capital city of Fejiti, it was an inviolable and untouchable castle that lay far out of anyone’s reach. For what reason did it appear in the sky? When did it show itself to humanity? So little was known about it, that its existence could be considered an elaborate illusion.

“Impossible? What do you mean by impossible, Glen?”

“Don’t you already know? That I’m not qualified to teach others…”

Glen’s visage was lonely and cold.

“Of course you’re not qualified, after all you don’t even have an instructor license”

“Don’t be like that. If a person has made a bitter decision, then you shouldn’t forcefully show them the reality of their situation.”

Towards Serika’s ridicule, Glen showed a unsatisfied expression.

“Well, you can rest assured about the instructor qualifications. With my status and authority at the academy, I can pull a few strings to get it done. Also, if you can show some results, it won’t be hard for me to get you an instructor’s license.”

“Hey, wait a sec! You’re planning to abuse your authority!?”

“With your abilities you’ll have no problem being a lecturer on magic, after all, you made some earnest contributions to the magic community a while back. So how about it? Would you like to try?”

“What should I do huh… Alright, even though I feel a bit anxious about this, but I’ve thought through this, and this decided to reject your proposal ok ~♪”

Glen put his index finger on his lips and tilted his head to the side. It was a cute gesture that gave the impression of a youthful schoolgirl.

“That action of yours is disturbing the say the least, and you also rejected my proposition. To be honest, I wish you would drop dead already.”

The veins were already visible on Serika’s forehead, and anyone could tell that she was at the limit of her patience.

“By the way, you don’t have the right to reject, you should understand this much right?”

Her cramped smile wouldn’t suggest otherwise.

“Oh? What if I do reject?”

“Do you like getting struck by lightning? Or would you rather be burnt to crisp?

Oh, actually, would you like to be encased in ice instead?”

“Ah, if you can’t convince me you’re going to use violence? You wouldn’t solve the actual problem like that would you?”

“You’re correct, but you’re not qualified to say that at all!”

A frightening amount of dense magic power gathered in the palm of Serika’s hand.

“Idiot. It’s like you don’t know the scary part of me at all…”

However, Glen didn't seem fazed in the slightest. Rather, he showed defiant grin, and turned to face Serika.

"You should know this already, but if I 'feel like it', I could make a magician of your level–."

"–Cheh"

Hearing what Glen said, an Serika showed a hint of nervousness.

"Your worthless threats have only served to make me 'feel like it'–!"

As he said that, Glen stamped firmly on the ground and – as if he was trying to touch the ceiling – jumped into the air. He lightly performed a somersault, and then, he got on his hands and knees, and planted his head to the ground in front of Serika's feet.

"Please support me for life!"

It was a splendid flying dogeza.

<TL Note: 'Dogeza' is Glen's posture>

"…I was frightened of you for a moment."

"Please Serika-san! I absolutely don't want to work, so please support me for lifeeeeee!! I'll even lick your shoes if you'd like!"

"How should I say this…Do you have no sense of human dignity?"

"Idiot! Is dignity edible!? Huh!? Come on, let's see you say something!?

"To think that you would throw your misplaced anger at me. Now that I think again, I really do want to kill you."

"…Fuu, I bestow you the right to support me."

"Go and die!"

Serika mercilessly stamped on Glen's head. Serika, who was known for her patience and open-mindedness, was now on the verge of tears.

"Damn you, just go find some work! If you don't want to work then get out of here! If you don't leave I'll really disintegrate you alright!? I can't to look at your degenerate face any longer!"

“You, are you a devil!? I didn’t ask for anything outrageous like world peace! All I want is to continue to peacefully live a plain and steady life of staying at home, is it really that hard to understand!? Is it too much to ask for this little wish of mine to be granted!? I mean, considering your massive assets, supporting me for a lifetime would be as easy as breathing!”

Without a hint of guilt, Glen continued to show his potential as a degenerate.

“And don’t you know this anyway!? I hate magic to the point where I feel like throwing up when I hear it!”

“…Glen”

“Basically, I absolutely! No matter what! Won’t do anything related to magic ever again! Hmpf, If I was going to be a magic lecturer, I’d rather become a beggar on the streets—”

“*<Return this to the providence of the cycle·Let the five elements return to its five elements·To unweave the binds anomaly and logic>*”

After Serika’s quick chant, a ray of light enveloped the space beside Glen, and – as if space itself was being devoured – a loud roar dominated the room.

Glen turned to look at where the ray struck, and found an empty, wide, circular hole in the wall. It was obvious at first glance that what happened in that one moment was a form of physical eradication. The abnormal effect which could only be described as ‘annihilation’–was something that could only be done through magic.

“Cheh…My aim was too careless.”

Serika gazed intently and pointed her palm at Glen, who stood frozen in place with his mouth half-open from shock.

“Well, I won’t miss this time… *<Return this to the providence of the cycle·Let the five elements return to its five elements·To unweave the binds anomaly and…*”

“M-, Mamaaaaaaaaaaaaa—-!?”

And so, the decision that Glen would be re-employed was half-forced through.

The job he found after a year of doing nothing, was a enviable position of temporary lecturer at Alzano Imperial Magic Academy. While his employment was limited to a month, it was a job that made him worried and anxious.

Chapter 1: The Unmotivated Part-time Lecturer

The Alzano Empire. It was an empire that was situated in the northwestern area of the North-Selford continent. Its lands – which experience wet winters and dry summers due to its oceanic climate – are ruled by a monarchy.

At the southern part of the empire, in the region of Yorkshire, there is a town named Fejiti.

The most prominent feature of Fejiti was the Alzano Imperial Magic Academy. If one were to ask which magical academy was the greatest amongst the numerous that existed in the North-Selford continent, the answer would undoubtedly be ‘Alzano Imperial Magic Academy’.

The town of Fejiti had been built concurrently with the establishment of the academic city, and both had experienced the development and prosperity of the other. The neatly arranged buildings – with their vintage pointed roofs – gave the town a thick atmosphere of sophistication and elegance. On the other hand, the presence of a Magic Academy had created a high demand for magical catalysts and items, which accommodated successful foreign trade, and ultimately allowed the town to prosper. Furthermore, due to high flow of people through the town, it was always at the forefront of domestic trends. The town was undoubtedly a fascinating union of ancient and modern elements.

On this mildly foggy morning in Fejiti, there was a young girl standing still on the stone pavement at the corner of the street, directly under a street lamp.

Her medium-length blonde hair looked as soft as cotton, and her sapphire-blue eyes left a strong impression on those that looked into them. Based on her appearance, one would say that she was a girl whose age was around fifteen or sixteen. The texture of her skin was like fine silk. Her refined and gentle

demeanor, combined with her neat and structured facial features, made her seem as lovely as an angel in a holy painting. She was a girl who – at first glance – seemed fragile, but at the same time, she seemed to carry a powerful conviction. That was the kind of girl she was— Contrary to the girl's captivating features that would make others turn their heads to take another look, her attire was rather strange. On top of her cool-looking vest and pleated skirt, she wore a feathered caped-hood… Though it was currently summertime in Fejiti, it was still undoubtedly cold in the morning. Yet, for some reason she was dressed lightly, and wore a glove on her left hand.

"~♪"

Anyhow, she appeared to be waiting for someone. As she idly stood on the pavement, she gripped the strap of her leather bag, and passed the time by humming. One could tell that she was in a pleasant mood.

It was then—

"…Ow-!"

Hearing a pained cry from behind, the girl turned around.

She saw an old man holding his finger, and a flint stone falling to the ground. Beside the man's feet was a metallic bucket filled with twigs and leaves.

"W-, What happened uncle?."

Though she didn't know who this old man was, she approached him without hesitation.

"Huh? Ah, hahaha… I've let this little lady see such an uncool side to me."

Feeling like he had bothered this kindhearted girl, the old man could only chuckle to himself and show a wry smile.

"Actually, when I was trying to dispose of the garbage I had collected by setting it on fire , my hands trembled, and I ended up scratching my finger instead… My, I'm not young anymore."

From a short distance away, one could see that the old man's finger was swollen and bleeding. The man put up a strong front, but the wound must have hurt considerably.

“My my, when I get back I’ll have to ask my wife to fetch some medical herbs won’t I…”

The young girl inspected the depth of the wound, and looked towards her surroundings. When she confirmed that no one was around, she revealed a mischievous smile, and placed her finger on her lips.

“It’s a secret alright?”

“…Hm?”

The old man tilted his head in confusion, but before he could form a reply, the girl gently grasped his hand, and began chanting in runic language.

“*<The angel’s charity>*”

Then, the girl’s hands began to glow faintly. At the same time, the old man’s wound began to rapidly heal.

The white magic [Life·Up]; It was a technique that greatly increased the target’s natural regeneration abilities.

“…O-Oh-…!?”

As the old man looked at his finger, his eyes widened in surprise.

“Hm, alright. After that is… *<Oh children of fire·Spark at the finger’s fore·Ablaze>*”

Next, the girl chanted the black magic [Fire·Torch], and a small flame appeared at the tip of her finger. She dropped the flame into the metal bucket, and its content were immediately lit ablaze.

“Little lady… That mysterious power… Is that the rumored ‘magic’?”

“Yes. To be honest, if the academy finds out that I used magic outside the campus, I will be severely punished.”

“Now that I think about it, that outfit… That’s the uniform of that strange academy. Little lady, can all your friends also use that mysterious technique?”

“Yes, though everyone else is more proficient than I am, and can use a much greater variety of abilities.”

“Eh… This is quite a convenient skill isn’t it? If an old man like me could use a

mysterious skill like that, then my life would be far more interesting and enjoyable…”

“Ahaha, I suppose that would be true. By the way uncle, about the magic that I used just now, uhm… if you could…”

“Oh, you want me to keep it a secret, yes? I got ya.”

“Yes, thank you very much.”

“What are you saying? I should be the one thanking you. Little lady, thanks for the help.”

As the young lady and old man exchanged delighted smiles—

“Lumia-! Sorry I’m late-!”

The clattering sound of hurried footsteps could be heard coming from afar. If one were to look into the distance, another young girl – dressed in the same fashion as the young girl standing on the sidewalk – could be seen approaching.

“Hm? That girl… Is she your friend?”

“Yes. She’s my close friend, and I’m currently living at her house. Well then, uncle, I should get going. Have a good day!”

“Aye, work hard on your studies alright?”

After saying her farewell, she walked towards her friend.

Since it was still rather early in the morning, the main street of Fejiti was fairly quiet.

On the neat and tidy granite-layered street, two girls were walking side-by side.

“Geez Lumia, you’re too nice of a person… even though I told you to go ahead without me…”

“Mm… I can’t… If leave the esteemed lady of the house behind, then I, who am nothing but a mere house guest, will definitely be scolded by the household’s head and his wife…”

“Idiot, can you stop joking around, we’re family alright?”

“Heh heh, sorry, Sisti.”

The two of them smoothly ended their discussion on a disconcerting topic.

“Well, anyway, it’s rare for Sisti to forget to something at home.”

Lumia – who had reunited with her friend after parting with the elder man – glanced at her friend a curious gaze.

“I had to run home because of that, and I even made you wait for me… sorry…”

The girl walking alongside Lumia, Sistina, lowered her shoulders and exhaled deeply with a melancholic sigh.

Sistina was of similar age to Lumia, and her most distinctive features were her free-flowing, lush silver long hair, and her feisty jade-colored eyes. Unlike Lumia, her snow-white skin and pretty face – which seemed as if it had been exquisitely sculpted – returned an unyielding presence. Perhaps it would be suitable to say that her presence was imposing and dazzling like a fairy. Though her face was currently entangled in a dejected expression, each and every move of hers seemed to exude a lively and ambitious aura. That was the kind of girl she was—.

Lumia and Sistina; although they were two different types of people, each had a temperament that could not be imitated by any ordinary girl. Their splendor – which they had been born with – was nothing short of magnificent. They were wearing the generic uniform of a magic academy, but somehow, one could feel the intimidating presence of the upper-class as they elegantly drifted along the ordinary street.

“Sisti…Could you still be, as I thought… you’re still feeling bad about what happened?”

Lumia looked at Sistina with concern, after all, her friend was not the type to forget something at home… That’s basically how it was.

“Probably…I guess.”

Sistina showed an energetic expression in hopes that her close friend wouldn’t worry any more about it. Despite her efforts, traces of an unresolved melancholy could still be found in her expression.

“It is unfortunate… Why did professor Huey suddenly quit instructing?”

“There was probably no other choice. Even the professor has his own problems.”

“Ah, it’s a shame… professor Huey’s lectures were easy to absorb, and if I had a question, he would give a concise and honest answer… He was so reliable, and…”

“He was really handsome as well right?”

“Huh! What are you saying!? It doesn’t matter if he’s handsome or not right!?”

Sistina’s face turned red at Lumia’s mention.

“As the next-in-line of the prestigious Fibel magic family, I go to the academy for the sole purpose of studying magic! My only standard regarding instructors is their ability to teach!*

However, Lumia could only show a knowing smile, and giggle at Sistina’s vigorous rebuttal.

“Ah, right right. Sisti, I forgot to mention this, but I heard that a temporary instructor will be replacing the professor today.”

“…I know that already.”

Sistina replied in a unamused fashion.

“Well, as long as they can teach half as well as professor Huey, I’m fine with it.”

“I understand how you feel. Once you get use to professor Huey’s lectures, any other professor’s lectures begin to feel insufficient.”

Then, as the two arrived at the crosswalk—

“Woaaaaaaaaaaahhhh!? I’m gonna be late, I’m gonna be late——!?”

With a pair of bloodshot eyes, a suspicious man holding a slice of bread in his mouth charged vigorously towards the two.

“…Eh?”

“Kyaa-!?”

“W-Wha–!? Yo, could you kids step aside—!”

An object in motion cannot quickly stop. Complying with this ancient law of physics, the man was on a crash course that aligned directly with the two girls— but then “O-, <*Oh the great wind*>-!”

Sistina quickly chanted runic words for the one-stage black magic [Gale·Blow], and in the next moment, her hands were wrapped in a powerful wind that sent the man flying. Then— “Huh-!? I, I’m flying-!?”

The man’s body was already at a height that one could not see without lifting their head. Then – in a perfect parabola – the man landed into the fountain across the road.

The two girls stared dumbfoundedly at the column of water that formed from the impact.

“Uhm, Sisti? …Isn’t that a bit too much?”

“I-, I guess? …Ahaha…it just… what should we do?”

The man that had become the subject of conversation for the two, splashed his way out of the fountain. Then, he wordless walked in front of the two and said: “Fu, you okay little ladies?”

“Rather, are you ok?”

The man gave his best effort to show a refreshing smile, but sadly, it was for naught.

The strange man appeared to be slightly older than Sistina and Lumia. With fair black hair, black eyes, and a fairly slim and tall body, there was no problem with his appearance, but the problem lay in his attire. He was dressed in a finely-tailored set of white dress shirt, tie, and black dress pants, all of which that perfectly suited his form. However, the person in question himself seemed to have found wearing these annoying, and his attire could only be described as ‘an untidy mess’. It was obvious to any observer that the one who chose, and the one who wore, were different people.

“Ahaha, well from now on try to avoid suddenly rushing out onto the road ok!?”

“Rather… aren’t you the one that rushed out onto the road…”

Sistina was about to thoughtlessly point out this fallacy, but then

“Y-You can’t Sisti!”

Lumia pushed herself between the Sistina and the unknown man.

“You can’t just push all the responsibility onto him. After all, Sisti, you suddenly attacked someone with magic… If even one thing went wrong there, then this won’t have ended with just scratches and bruises you know?”

“Mm…Sorry.”

Sistina cast her eyes downwards in shame.

“Now, Sisti, you should apologize.”

“Mm. Uhm… I’m really sorry about that. Please forgive my rashness.”

“Geez I want to see how your parents look like you know!? Man, what kind of education did they ever give you? Ah?”

“…Even though I tried to be civil, just what kind of attitude…What is wrong with this person?”

“Ah, Ahaha… Must resist. Must resist…”

With a slight aversion towards how the situation was unfolding, Lumia hastily bowed her head.

“Excuse our behavior! Could you please forgive my friend for what she did?”

“Ah well I guess there’s no other way huh! Though I totally didn’t do anything wrong, and it’s obvious that this is all your fault, but if you’re going to go this far, I can make a special exception and forgive y-…hm?”

The man, who was looking discontentedly at Lumia, suddenly raised his eyebrows, as if noticing something important.

“Hm… Hm…”

“U-Uhm… Is there something on my face?”

Without regard for Lumia’s discomfort, the man moved his face closer to hers.

Lumia – who was suddenly met with such an impolite gesture – blinked blankly in surprise.

“Ah…You…Where have I…”

While tilting his head thru and thro in thought, the man raised his finger and poked Lumia’s forehead. He turned her head around in his hands and pulled her cheeks. Then he touched her petite shoulders and hips, felt her hair, and locked his eyes with hers…

“You bastard, what do you think you’re doing————!?”

Without so much as a moment’s delay, Sisti furiously sent a roundhouse kick aimed squarely at the back of his head.

Needless to say, the man was once again sent flying.

“ZuhGyaa————————!?”

The man released a scream as he tumbled across the pavement. Unfortunately, his attire, which he had probably worn for the first time today, was not only soaked, but also painted by dirt and gravel. The original appearance of his outfit was already long gone.

“It’s fine if you accidentally collide with us, but what was that!? I find it hard to believe that you would touch a girl’s body without any ulterior motives, you disgusting freak!”

“Hold up, just simmer down a bit ok!? I, as a scholar, was merely motivated by my spirit of curiosity and investigation you know!? I only had a teensy bit of those guilty thoughts alright!?”

“That’s not any better!”

“Guh-Ho-!?”

The man curled in agony as he was punched squarely in the stomach by Sistina.

“Lumia, call the police. This guy is definitely a pervert.”

“Eh!? Wait, give me a break already! If my first day at work turns out like that, Serika’s gonna kill me! I’m really sorry for real! Please forgive me! I was just fooling around ok!?”

To be precise, the full grown adult man – without consideration for his pride – performed a splendid dogeza towards two young girls, and was now begging for their mercy.

“Uhm… He seems to have reflected, so let’s just forgive him.”

“Huh? For real? Well, noble ladies are just that kind I guess…”

“Thank you very much! I will never forget this act of kindness for the rest of my life! Thank you very much!”

Then, the man stood up, and in an overbearing manner, said:

“Well then you guys. That uniform means you’re students of the academy right? What are you doing here?”

“To treat forgiveness as an act of salvation, what exactly…what is he? That person.”

“Ah, Ahaha…”

The two of them stood wordlessly at the crosswalk.

“What time do you think it is? If you don’t hurry up you’ll be late alrighty? You got me? Oh… just now, I felt like a totally amazing instructor…”

The man reveled in his own words. On the other hand, the girls looked at each other, and aimlessly raised their heads towards the sky.

“…Are we…late?”

“He’s just joking around. Don’t we still have some spare time?”

“Of course not-! Ah-! Geez, it’s already past eight-thirty!”

The man took out his pocket watch, and shoved it towards Sistina.

“That watch, isn’t it just ahead of time? Here, look.”

As if giving up hope for the man, Sistina took out her own watch.

The hands of the watch indicated that the time was now eight o’clock. Today’s lecture, on the other hand, began at eight-forty.

“……..”

A mysterious, solemn atmosphere surrounded the two.

Then.

“Tactical retreat!”

“You’re running—!?”

The man vigorously ran away in the same manner as when they had first met.

“Damnit! Did that girl mess with my watch as well!?” shouted the man as he ran off into the distance. The two girls wordlessly saw him off.

“That…That person. What’s with him?”

“…Mm, but I suppose he’s an interesting person?”

“That’s already past the realm of interesting. That thing…”

Like before, Sistina sighed at her close friend’s sensibilities.

“I don’t ever want to see that guy again. I can’t help but get annoyed when I

see a pathetic piece of trash like him! I shouldn't have held back at all! As I thought, I should've just brought that guy to the police! Right?"

"Ahehe…"

And once again, Lumia giggled as she walked alongside Sistina. Together, the two of them began walking towards the academy. Sistina in particular, worked hard to purge her memories of that unknown perverted man, after all, the arrangement of memory was the simplest of basic magics. In reality, she had already effaced the existence of this man from her memory.

"Well then, let's work hard today as well alright, Lumia?"

"Mhm."

Finally, the two arrived in front of the magnificent academy, whose grounds were firmly surrounded by a steel fence—

The Alzano Imperial Magic Academy, there was no one in the empire that did not know of its name. Four hundred years ago, by the decree of Empress Alicia the third, all of the nation's funds were gathered to construct the national facility; an academy that would nurture magicians. Now, this academy was the cornerstone of Alzano Empire that allowed the empire to be renowned across the continent as a 'nation of magic'. The rumor that all the famous magicians of the empire had graduated from this academy was not just a simple rumor, but rather, an unshakeable truth. It would be prudent to say that Alzano Imperial Magic Academy was the holy ground for those who pursued the path of magic. As a direct result of this, the students and professor thought of their association to the school with utmost pride, and that pride was used to further fuel their eternal pursuit of magic. Not a single soul lay idle on the wayside, for they knew that their research could one day become the basis for the entirety of the empire, and such a crowning achievement would surely cement their position, place, and glory in society.

Thus, something like 'lateness' or 'skipping class' – events that would occur when going to Sunday schools and the like – would never occur at this academy. The lecturers, as the ones who would respond to the fiery will of the students, would too, hold themselves to the same standard. It was something that had never happened, and never would happen.

“…Slow-!”

At the center of the eastern section of the academy campus, on the second floor, was the classroom for the second year class two, students. The rows of long, round, wooden tables were all aligned in a semi-circular fashion, and directly faced the lecturer’s podium and the large blackboard that was behind it. Sitting in front row of the classroom was Sistina. She was current reaching the limit of her patience, and her frustrations could no longer be hidden.

“What is this supposed to mean!? Isn’t it already past the time of the lecture!?”

“You’re right, this feels a bit strange…”

Lumia, who was seated next to Sistina tilted her head and pondered.

“I wonder if something happened to the teacher…”

Looking at the podium that was left unoccupied by a seemingly non-existent instructor, the other students also voiced their complaints.

“A temporary instructor is supposed to succeed professor Huey starting from today.”

Magicians were ranked from one to seven. The esteemed professor Serika Alfornea, who herself was of the highest, seventh rank, had personally come to the classroom during the homeroom session to break the news, but since then, one hour had already passed. The judgement that had been nested in the students’ minds when she had said “Well, it’s an excellent fellow” had already all but collapsed.

“I had some expectations when I heard that professor Alfornea had personally recommended the instructor…but it looks like it’s not going to happen.”

“T-, That can’t be, and isn’t it too early to judge? There could be a reason as to why the instructor is late…”

Sistina turned towards Lumia, and vigorously rebutted.

“You’re too simple, Lumia. Listen, no matter what their reason could be, the act of ‘being late’ is evidence for the person’s lack of self-awareness. For a truly excellent person, something like ‘being late’ is absolutely unacceptable.”

“Is that so…”

“Geez, to be late on the very first day, this new instructor sure has a lot of guts. I’ll need to have a word with them when they arrive…”

It was then.

“Ah-, my bad my bad, I’m late–”

A seemingly familiar voice drifted through the door as it slammed open.

The rumored temporary instructor had finally arrived. Of course, that was after half the class period had already passed. It could be said that this was the first time such an incident had occurred in the 400 year history of the academy.

“You finally arrived huh! Hey wait, how are you going to explain yourself!? As an instructor of this magical academy you should have some more self—”

The moment the man walked into the classroom, Sistina turned to lecture the man…The next moment however, she froze in place.

“Y-, Y-, YYY—, You are-!”

As cause and casualty would have it, the man’s attire was still soaked, and his body was scratched up, bruised, and dirty from the time he had rolled on the ground.

Those hated memories resurfaced; This was the perverted man they had met on the way to school, and right now, he was standing before them in this sacred hall.

“…You’re wrong. You have the wrong person.”

Hearing Sistina’s accusation, the man brazenly tried to budge his way out of this troublesome situation.

“What do you mean I’m mistaken!? Could another man like you even exist!?”

The man, with a lecturing tone, replied to Sistina.

“Now now little girl, did your parents not tell you that it’s disrespectful to point fingers at people?”

“Anyway, you, how could you be this late!? In that situation, how did you even manage to be this late!?”

“About that… When I thought that I was out of time, I was suddenly blessed with spare time. So I decided to go to the park and take a little nap, and then I ended up late, you see?”

“Not only is your reason unbelievable, it doesn’t even qualify as an excuse!”

There were too many things that were wrong with what the man said, and at this point, she didn’t feel like pushing the interrogation any further.

Others in the room felt the same, and because of the strange appearance of their instructor, the students began to chatter amongst one another.

Ignoring the state that his class was in, the man elegantly walked to the podium, and wrote his name on the blackboard.

“Alright-, I am Glen Ryders. In the coming month, I will be in charge of guiding your studies. The time is short, but let’s all work hard toge…”

“Greetings aside, can you start the class already?”

Said Sistina. Her restraint had too, reached the limit, and a hefty coldness could be felt in her words.

“Ah-, well, I guess so… I’m still tired, but I guess we should start anyway… It’s my job after all…”

Just like that, the impressions brought upon by his introductory statements had flown out the window, and his true nature was revealed.

“Well let’s get this started… The first class is Basic Magic Theory II huh… Ah–hu~.”

Glen tried to his best to hold back his yawn, and walked up to the blackboard.

The students focused their minds on the instructor’s’ actions, and Sistina herself had cast aside her negative impression on the person called Glen. She focused herself on his each and every move.

(Now, how will you do…)

She had the worst possible first impression of him, but this man named Glen had been evaluated as, ‘rather excellent’, by one of the top magicians of the nation, Serika Alfornea. It would be a lie to say that she had no expectations

towards his instruction.

Unbeknownst to her, Sistina had already subconsciously accepted Serika's evaluation, however, she would still be the one to make the final judgment of his character. As she had done in the past, she would relentlessly inquire about everything she did not understand during her lecture. In that case, and in this environment, there was no way for the instructor to dodge the question. At some point, this hard-headedness of hers had earned her the nickname of 'The harbinger of the professor's tears, Sistina'. The nickname was fairly well-known across the school, however, to the person herself, this was merely proof of her earnest efforts in pursuing the path of magic. Due to that, she had no complaints regarding the title. As a matter of fact, she was somewhat proud of it.

(Now, let's see what you can do, hotly anticipated temporary instructor-san.)

Needless to say, Sistina and the class carefully scrutinized the instructor's actions.

Under their watchful gaze, Glen wrote two words on the blackboard.

Self Study

Seeing the large words written on the board, the class entered a state of solemn silence.

"Eh? Self study…eh? Self stu…dy? Eh? …Eh!?"

Sistina desperately tried to rationalize the meaning of the words written on the board into some other meaning, but it was for naught. After all, those two words only held one meaning.

"Uh-, so the first session of today's lectures will be self study~"

After that, Glen told them his reason.

"…Cause I'm tired."

He boldly announced his terrible reason.

"……"

The silence that followed dominated the classroom and its students.

Without a care for the class that looked upon him Glen proudly announced

that “The one who is wrong is not me, but the world”, and hunched down on the teacher’s desk.

Then.

“Wait a second—!?”

Sistina, with her thick textbook in hand, charged towards Glen.

「えー、本日の一限目の授業は自習にしまーす」
「……眠いから」
自習
「……」
沈黙が支配している。
圧倒的な沈黙がクラスを支配している。
そして。
「ちょおっと待てえええええ――ッ!?」
ルミア＝ティンジェル
清楚で心優しい少女。とある誰にも言えない秘密を抱え、親友のシスティーナと共に魔術の勉強に一生懸命励む
グレン＝レーダス
魔術嫌いな魔術講師。いい加減でやる気ゼロ、魔術師としても三流で、いい所まったくナシ。だが、本当の顔は――？
システィーナ＝フィーベル
生真面目な優等生。偉大な魔術師だった祖父の夢を継ぎ、その夢の実現に真っ直ぐな情熱を捧げる少女

“Please do try and reconsider, headmaster!”

A furious voice escaped the headmaster’s room in Alzano Imperial Magic Academy.

The voice came from a bespectacled man in his mid-twenties. If one were to judge his appearance, it might be said that he looked rather neurotic. However, pinned to his robes was an emblem of an owl that showed that he was a professor of the prestigious academy. His name was Harry. While most magicians are only able to reach the fourth rank by the end of their lives, this man had managed to reach the fifth rank at a remarkably young age, and was undoubtedly a genius deserving of his title.

“I oppose the appointment of Glen Ryders as a temporary instructor! His origins are barely known!”

He slammed the desk with a ‘bang’. Seated across the desk was a middle-aged man.

“However, Harry-kun, he’s someone that was strongly recommended by Serika-kun, do you understand?”

Despite the enraged attitude of the one across him, the middle-aged man remained unfazed, and returned a gentle and rational reply.

“Headmaster Rick! Are you agreeing with that witch’s proposition?”

“Of course, it is because I agreed, that Glen-kun was able to become temporary instructor. It’s true that he does not have an instructor’s license. However, as long as has a professor’s recommendation, and is capable of instructing, there are no problems with his temporary appointment…”

“His capability is exactly the problem! Please read this and reconsider!”

With a ‘plop’, Harry placed a file on the desk in front of the headmaster.

“This is the results of the capability test of that man named Glen! I mean, what the heck is this? Just look at these terrible results!”

“Hm? Hoho, so these results aren’t anything special. His magical capacity and

memory are normal, his systems capability is plain, there's nothing bad but nothing good about him as a magician… No, looking at his basic abilities he's somewhere between the middle to lower class of magicians."

Rick picked up the file, and skimmed through it.

"Furthermore he's only a third-ranked magician! Look at his academic history as well!"

"Hm? …Oh? So he's an alumni of this school."

"It would be improper to call him an 'alumni'. That guy didn't even submit his magical thesis."

Harry sighed as if he was unimpressed.

"Glen Ryders. He entered the academy at the age of eleven…Eleven!?"

Reading through the file, an uncomposed shout escaped Rick's mouth.

"Normally, the age of admission is fourteen or fifteen years old! And now you're telling me he was admitted at the age of eleven!?"

"However, that guy's glory ends there. After entering the academy, his grades were extremely normal. Then, after four years of study, at the age of fifteen he graduated… Rather, he dropped out under the cover of 'graduation'. The results he left behind were completely normal, and there's nothing to write home about."

"Hmpf… Anyhow, if it's only that…"

"However, what he did after that is the biggest problem! That guy disregarded the fact that he once stepped on the path towards the holy ground of magic! He's completely wasted four years of time since he graduated! If he had pursued magic during that time, there's no telling how many contributions he could have made to society!"

It was true that in the box labeled 'history', the last four years were completely blank.

"Hmm? …He was unemployed for the past four years… what exactly happened during that time?"

“Quit joking around! You should know what I want to say already! A low=ranked and vulgar magician like him does not deserve to teach at this academy!”

“Hm-pf, if my memory serves me correctly, there is no requirement regarding history or rank to teach at this school, yes?”

“It hasn’t been documented, but it’s practically an unwritten law!”

Once again, Harry furiously slammed the desk.

“Please think about the professors we have at the academy! Fourth-ranks are a given, but there are even fifth and sixth ranks here! Not to mention, every single one of them is putting their efforts in magic research, and leaving magnificent results! Why should that Glen man be placed on the same level as those instructors!?”

“Hmpf…”

“You as well, Headmaster! How could you accept his appointment without so much as reading through his documentation!?”

“Well, I mean, you see? That man was personally recommended by Serika-kun yes? In that case… wouldn’t you have thought that the person in question would not only be interesting, but also fairly capable?”

Rick’s lips twisted as though he had done something naughty.

“Of course not! You think too highly of that witch! She’s only basking in the glory of her former days, and is abusing that glory to crush the rules and order of our society!”

Then.

“How bold of you, Harry.”

The voice that resounded through the room caused Harry to cease moving entirely.

“Fufu, that snotty little brat has now has become a prideful man. I’m happy you know?”

When Harry turned his head, he saw Serika standing in a corner of the room

with a mischievous smile on her face.

“Hey… Since when were you here? Serika Alfornea…”

“I wonder? Since when was I here? Treat this as a teacher’s question for a poor student. Take a guess.”

“Teleportation magic… No, time-control… How could that be…? I didn’t even sense the magical waves, nor did I sense manipulation of the world’s laws…”laws of the world…”

“Alright~ You’re wrong. You, you’re still a third-rate student, so be more diligent would you? Now then, for your homework, give me a three-hundred page report on the mysterious phenomenon that occurred just now. Ah, by the way, this is the professor’s orders ok?”

“Kuh-!”

Turning away from the trembling Harry, Serika turned towards Rick, and gave an elegant bow.

“How do you do, headmaster?”

“Oh, Serika-kun. You look as beautiful as usual, I’m rather jealous.”

“Fufufu, you’re still young, headmaster.”

“Hohoho, is that so! Then Serika-kun, would you fancy a night with this elder?”

“Ahaha, I refuse. However, you are as energetic as usual, aren’t you, headmaster? Isn’t it about time for you to wither a little?”

“Fuwahahaha-! This elder has always been energetic!”

This warm atmosphere was suddenly dispersed as Harry slammed on the table.

“I won’t approve of him, Serika Alfornea! I will never approve of an idiotic instructor of the likes of him! If anything happens, I’ll have you take full responsibility!”

“…Take it back.”

In the next moment, the air in the room turned cold.

“I don’t care if you speak badly about me, nor will I bother to deal with you if

you speak badly of him behind my back. However… I will not allow you to speak badly of him in front of me. Take it back, and beg for forgiveness.”

Serika’s domineering presence left Harry at a loss for words.

“Wh-, at are… The fact that Glen… is just a worthless third-rate magician… is a plain truth,…is…n’t…it…-!?”

Despite the beads of sweat that trickled down his face, Harry managed to force these words out of his throat.

Serika narrowed her eyes, and coldly said:

“Will you be able to bear this?”

She slowly removed the glove on her left hand.

“—!?”

Seeing that gesture, Harry understood what she was going to do next. He began to panic, and color rapidly escaped his expression.

“I-, I understand… I’ll take it back… I was…wrong…”

Hearing that, Serika showed a sweet smile, and re-wore her half removed glove.

“Damnit… I’ll remember this!”

Leaving behind the empty threat, Harry rushed out of the room.

The room which now contained only Serika and Rick was hastily enveloped in a solemn silence.

“My my, you’re the same as usual aren’t you? I feared that the headmaster’s room might just disappear today.”

Rick released an amazed sigh.

“However, Serika-kun, as I had expected, the man you brought in is a rather troublesome one.”

“…I know that, and I am truly quite sorry about that.”

“To forcefully appoint a magician of unknown origins as an instructor at this academy… You won’t only receive opposition from Harry-kun, rather, I fear that

all those related to the academy may have the same reaction.”

After a brief moment of silence, Serika firmly said.

“I’ll take responsibility. Everything that that man does or will do, I will take responsibility for it.”

“There’s no need to go so far to support him… What kind of relationship do you and him have…? May I hear it?”

“It’s nothing gossip worthy like destiny or anything of the sort. It just that…”

“Just that?”

“I want him to move forward. Well, I suppose it’s just a bit of solicitude.”

<TL Note: The phrases Serika uses here is 生き生きとして, which means ‘lively’ out of context, and 老婆心, which has a motherly implication.>

“Woah-, Look at that Road, our instructor…”

“Wow, amazing…his eyes are totally dead…”

“That’s the first time I’ve seen someone so unlively…”

The classroom was consumed by the chattering of the students.

“And~~ It’s kind like this~~ Yea, it feels like this and~~and~~Basically, it’s like this~”

The students focused their gazes on a man with a giant lump on his head…

With zombie-like movements, Glen continued lecturing.

“Ah, it would be better if we got professor Huey instead…”

“Why did professor Huey quit…”

To put it mildly, Glen’s lecture was the worst lecture the students had ever attended.

Anyhow, the contents of his lecture was entirely incomprehensible. He did not explain the contents of his lecture, nor did he do anything more than lousily recite the magic theory from the book. Though, while it might’ve been acceptable to recite from the book, the worst offense was that it was mostly

unrelated to the topic at hand. In this manner, Glen continued to scribble incomprehensibly on the blackboard.

Though the students could not understand the contents of the lecture, they were able to understand that their instructor was completely unmotivated. The students came to the conclusion that – rather than wasting their time listening to his lecture – they should just self-study from the textbook.

Even so, there were some diligent and energetic students that wanted to gain something from this terrible lecture.

“Uhm…sensei…I have a question…”

A petite female student raised her hand.

Her name was Rin. Though she looked weak and feeble, she had energy akin to a small animal.

“What’s up? Tell me about it.”

“Erm… About the runic language example that sensei just introduced on page fifty-six, row three… I don’t understand the modern translation of this…”

“It’s ‘k, I don’t get it either.”

“Eh?”

“Sorry ‘bout this, but go investigate that yourself.”

Hearing that overly honest and somewhat overbearing answer, Rin was at a loss for words.

As for Sistina, who was already about to burst out in anger, Glen’s response had lit her fuse. She vigorously stood out of her seat and complained.

“Stop right there, sensei. Isn’t responding adequately to the student’s question part of your duty as a professor?”

Glen sighed at Sistina’s hasty accusation. It was obvious to everyone that he felt annoyed by this confrontation.

“Hey you know. I already told you that I—don’t—know, right? How can I teach something that I don’t get at all?”

“If you can’t answer the student’s question immediately, you’re supposed to

investigate after class and answer. Isn't that part of your responsibility as an educator?"

"Hm… In that case, isn't it just faster to investigate that yourself?"

"That's not the problem! What I want to say is—"

"…Ah, could it be that you guys haven't learned how to use a runic language dictionary? Well then I guess I have to huh… Well then, this is kinda annoying but I'll go look it up. Ah—ah, more work again…"

"Tch… We know how to use a dictionary! Ah that's enough already!"

Glen, who did not want to change his unmotivated attitude.

Sistina, who angrily and inelegantly seated herself.

And Lumia, who nervously witnessed the event unfold.

The classroom atmosphere was the terrible.

The malevolence amongst the students seemed to increase without end.

Time was wasted away.

And thus, Glen's historic first lecture ended without accomplishing anything.

After the lesson; In the academy's female changing room—

Sistina angrily shoved her uniform, cape, and robe into the wooden locker, and vented her frustration.

"Geez, come on already, what was that supposed to mean!? That guy!"

"Ahaha…Now now…"

Although Lumia tried to comfort her, Sistina's anger wouldn't subside so easily.

"Isn't he a little too unmotivated!? Even if it's just temporary, why did that guy become an instructor at this academy!?"

"Mhm… it would be better if Glen-sensei worked a little harder."

The next class for today was alchemical lab.

The female's clothes had the continuous black magic [Air·Conditioning] – which modifies the temperature and humidity of the surrounding air – cast on them. So unlike their appearance, they were a convenient set of clothes that made its wearer cool in the summer and warm in the winter. Unlike males, females are recommended to wear less clothing during their academic period in order to increase their affinity to the magic power in their surroundings called 'mana'. So for them, these clothes were their best companion.

However, alchemical lab was a class in which the students had to personally interact with magic ingredients, control machinery, and utilize catalysts and reagents. Based on the contents of the lab, it wasn't unlikely for the clothes to be stained or leave a foul odor.

Now, in their half-nakedness, their delicate skin and their clear curves – belonging to those in the interim between child to adult – were exposed. The evidence of their youth lay bare. To the young boys that would never witness this; this scene was akin to utopia.

"Hah…If I remember correctly that guy is our supervisor for alchemical lab as well?"

"Mhm, after all, Glen-sensei is Huey-sensei's successor."

"Ugh…I feel like I'm gonna explode."

Then, Sistina's downcast expression suddenly transformed into a mischievous smirk. She turned to glance at Lumia, who was in the middle of changing.

"I need… some healing time."

"Sisti?"

Whilst Lumia was still confused, Sistina hugged her from behind.

"Take this!"

"Kya!?"

Sistina stuck to Lumia's back, and grasped her two mounds to her heart's content.

「きゃん！　システィ、
あっ、だめ！」
「むむむ……ルミア。
貴女、なーんか
順調に育ってるわね……」

“Ah—, as expected, Lumia’s are the best~. The skin is white, elegant, yet still exquisite.”

“Wha, Sisti, Y-you can’t do that-!”

Realizing what had happened, Lumia tried to shake herself free of Sistina’s cat-like grasp. However, Sistina captured Lumia in a snake-like motion, and did not allow Lumia to escape.

“Kyan! Sisti, ah, stop!”

“Hmhmhm… Lumia. Your growth has been quite splendid…”

Sistina understood that the warm and calming sensation that was transmitted through her palms had changed slightly since the last time, and to this phenomenon, Sistina raised her eyebrows. In essence, Lumia’s chest was neither large nor small, instead, they appeared as though they had been tailored for her body; Two ideal, perfectly-proportioned hills.

“Hah… Isn’t this great. Why doesn’t my nutrition go to my chest huh….Ugh… Rather than being healed, I feel discouraged…”

“Wait… stop Sisti. Not that hard…Ah, Ahn!”

“Ah—, Geez, how envious! Here here, does it feel good here? Hm? Hm?”

“Hya! N-, No-! Stop…”

Anyhow, it seems that in this kind of place, and in this kind of situation, young girls often did this kind of thing.

“A-, Amazing Teresa! You, since when—”

“Ufufu, it’s the growth period after all.”

“How cruel of you to leave me behind! Take this! Things like these should get treated like this!”

“Kya~! W-, Wendy-san-!?”

The changing room was filled with scenes like this.

The female students joyously passed this time.

However, in front of all these girls, the changing room door was roughly flung

open.

“Ah—, This is so annoying! Why do I have to change! Ugh Serika that… hm?”

Standing in the doorway was a suspicious man wearing borrowed lab clothes.

It was Glen.

The ones who were facing and closest to the door – Sistina and Lumia – met his gaze.

And in that moment, all three of them froze.

The beautiful scene of a fairy’s playtime was nowhere to be seen, and the room was invaded by a frozen hell. It felt like time itself had stopped, and the atmosphere was wrapped by a solemn chill.

“…Ah-”

Glen slowly inspected his surroundings, and once confirming that all the people present were female, he scratched his head as if annoyed, and turned to look at the door sign.

“It’s different from before… So the positions of the male and female changing rooms have swapped huh… Geez, why did they do something so pointless?”

The atmosphere in the room was washed away with murderous intent.

In the face of this unstoppable force, Glen boorishly sighed.

“My—my. Is this the ‘lucky pervert’ scene that’s recently become popular in the capital? Ahaha~, though I didn’t think it would happen to me of all people.”

With Sistina leading the pack, the female students began to move.

In a show of pomp and circumstance, Glen vigorously thrust his hand forth to stop the incoming threat.

“Ah—, wait up. Can you guys calm down a bit? You know, I usually have some complaints about this kind of fated development. Now now, just listen to what I have to say alright? Just treat it as my last words—”

The girls stopped moving. Even if it was a death penalty, they would allow him to say his part.

“I was thinking… The MC in those stories are all idiots you know? By the time this kind of lucky lewd event happens, it’s already decided that the heroine will beat the crap out of them. So why exactly do they pull their hands away and avert their gaze? Just for rubbing a girl’s body the wrong way, they get subjected to cruel mistreatment you know? No matter how you look at this, doesn’t that totally violate the concept of equivalent exchange?”

After his shameless monologue, Glen proceeded to announce from the depths of his soul.

“That is why, I—shall burn this image in my mind!”

Glen, with an expression of raw carnage, widened his bloodshot eyes and stood firmly in place. He roved his eyes over the skin-colored canvas—

“”””THIS—PERVERT——!”””””

On this day, the female students of Alzano Imperial Magic Academy, year two, class two, instigated a cruel and violent incident. The victim was a certain temporary instructor.

By the way, the alchemical lab class for that day was cancelled, as the instructor was in an unconscious state.

“Ah that hurts… Damn that really hurts… D-, Did they really have to go that far? Usually speaking…”

The current time was a little past 12, and it was time for the afternoon break.

In the aftermath, Glen’s body was scratched and bruised. His clothes were in an irreparable state. With tears in his eyes, he stumbled down the hallway as if he were a zombie. The students that passed by all failed to hide their surprise, but Glen, in his current state, failed to notice their gazes.

“But really, the kids these days are developing well… What the heck do they eat to grow like that? …Though one of them was underdeveloped. Well, whatever, it’s time for lunch, lunchtime~.”

Glen muttered these brutish words, which if heard, might have cost him his life, and slowly trudged his way towards the academy’s cafeteria.

Alzano Imperial Magic Academy's campus was akin to that of a massive noble estate, and its cafeteria was located on the first floor of the main building. The food it provided was inexpensive yet highly rated. Throughout the academy's long history, the rating had remained unchanged.

"Ah—, I haven't been here in a long time~"

Each of the many long tables in the cafeteria was covered by a white sheet of tablecloth, and decorated by assorted sets of candle stands. Though the cafeteria was rather large, the amount of students rushing in after their morning lectures made the place feel cramped.

At this cafeteria, one would go to the counter and place their order. Once the food was prepared, they would pay the cashier to complete the order, then sit anywhere they pleased.

Glen placed his order at the counter, located at the innermost section of the cafeteria.

"Ah—, I want a local herb-roasted chicken with fried potato with Largo sheep-milk cheese, Elisha sprout salad, and a bowl of tomato sauce stir-fried Kirua beans. I'll have a potage soup and rye bread with that. Large size for all of them."

<TL Note: Largo is a type of sheep, Rabo Largo. Elisha and Kirua are names of places.>

Glen was a skinny person with a large appetite, and he had been told off by Serika countless times as a result.

After a short while, the food arrived, and Glen reached for his coin purse and took out a few Seruto copper coins. After he paid the cashier, he retrieved the wood bowls that contained what he ordered.

"Now then, are there any empty seats…"

The cafeteria was filled to the brim with students, and almost none of the seats were left unoccupied. However, at there were two open, adjacent seats at the far-right side of Glen.

Though Glen did not know who those seats were saved for, he hastily walked towards those precious empty seats.

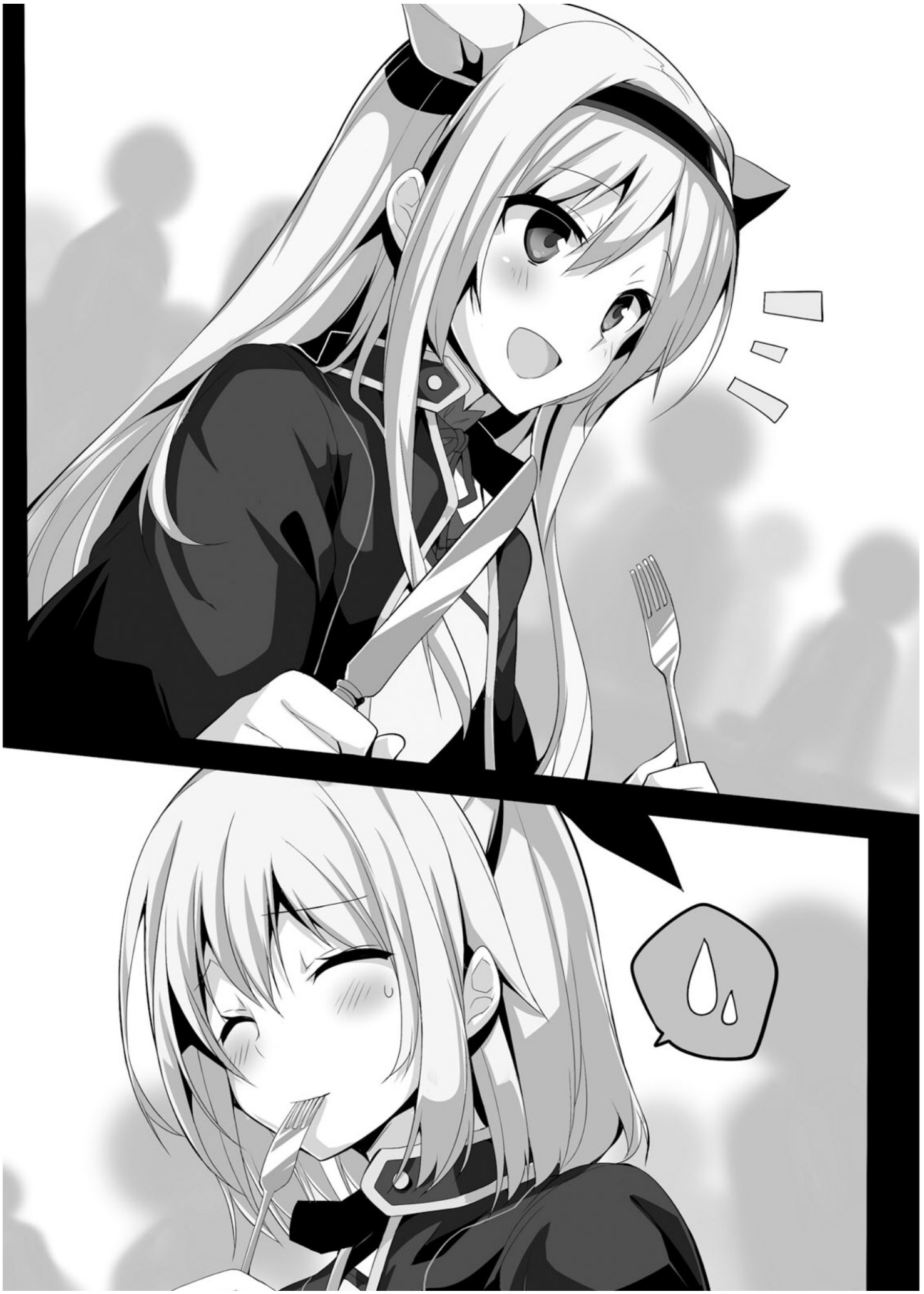
And then he noticed—

“That’s why I think Fuzel-sensei’s thesis on classical magic is strange. What do you think about it? Lumia.”

Directly across from the seat that Glen wanted to sit in, were two familiar faces.

“According to that person, the ‘Sky Castle Melgarius’ was constructed around 4500 years B.H. While that matches up to time where dimension techniques were thought to have been used by ancient civilizations; According to the relics in the ruins discovered around Fejiti, the ‘Sky Castle Melgarius’ already existed in 5000 B.H. Ignoring this fact, what was that person thinking when they use the reason ‘it could not have existed without these techniques, and therefore it must’ve been 4500 B.H.’? I mean, the new ‘time-dating magic’ that he created is clearly being used to falsify this 500 year difference! The entire thesis reeks of the way modern magicians think; They over-prioritize thought and literature, and neglect the use of thorough investigation! Also, while it’s true that the dimensional techniques of the ancient civilization could make the sky castle transparent, wouldn’t its effect have already ended by now? I mean, considering the density of mana, and the limits of extension magic,—(*Hah*)—the half-life of the mana conflicts with what the thesis suggests.—(*Hah*)—Furthermore, expressive classical language has clearly branched into three types over time.—(*Hah*)—Basically, around about the difference between implications of god found in the study of heraldic symbols, and the religious belief of the people;—(*Hah*)—The ancient civilization that was written about in Terrick’s decompositional thesis of the myth, had not only one, but several different cultures.—(*Hah*)—(*Hah*)—(*Hah*)—”

“I-, Is that so…”



The silver-haired girl forgot entirely about eating, and began to chatter away. In the face of the silver-haired girl's passion, the golden haired girl sitting beside her – Lumia – could only return a warm smile. She was at a loss for words.

Anyhow, the two were currently discussing classical magic literature (well, one-sidedly so).

Classical magic literature was the study and research of super-magic cultures that existed during the B.H. period, with the final goal of replicating the magic techniques there were used during that time period. Amongst them, the magicians who were devoted to the 'Sky Castle Melgarius' were called Melgarians.

And it would appear that this silver-haired girl was a Melgarian through and through.

"Excuse me."

With this short greeting, Glen seated himself in directly in front of the golden-haired girl, and diagonally away from the silver-haired girl.

In an instant, the silver-haired girl seemed to snap out of her trance, and notice Glen's existence.

"—!? Ah, Y-Y-, You are—"

"You're wrong. You have the wrong person."

Elegantly ignoring her, Glen began to eat.

He first cut the herb-roasted chicken into thin slices. Then, he filled the rye-bread with a few slices, which were accompanied by chopped pieces of fried potato and some cheese salad, and fed it into his mouth. The bitterness of the sprout salad mixed with the sweet fragrance of the coal-roasted chicken to create a refreshing taste. Needless to say, the additional scent of herbs invigorated his appetite.

"Delicious~. This kind of rough feeling really suits the empire's style huh…"

Next, Glen fed the tomato sauce stir-fried Kirua beans into his mouth. The tomato sauce, which used chili and garlic as spices, had a flavorful and sharp taste.

Not a long time had passed since a certain incident, but Glen had already reverted to his nonchalant and indulgent attitude. Seeing that, the silver-haired girl – Sistina – opened her mouth to protest, but couldn't find the words to say.

The only sound that reverberated from the three was the cling and clang of silverware.

Due to this unexpected development, the atmosphere around the three was invaded by an oppressive silence. One could say that it was an awkward dining scene… or at least, it almost was.

"Uhm…Sensei, you sure eat a lot don't you? Do you really like eating?"

"Hm? Ah, eating is one of the few activities that I can do for pleasure.

"Hehe, I see. That stir-fried food looks really delicious as well. It has a strong, fragrant smell."

In such a manner, Lumia had managed to replace Sistina, whose mood had turned sour at Glen's introduction. As Sisti had turned silent, Lumia tried her best to converse with Glen.

Unlike Sistina, whose wrathful intent was clear as day, Lumia bore no grudge towards the earlier incident. By the way, she did not participate in Glen's punishment.

"Oh, you could tell? Well, during this time of the year, the school will import a variety of new beans, and the Kirua beans in particular have a strong and distinctive fragrance. It's also currently in season you know?"

Glen was not the type to actively pursue a conversation, but if someone tried to strike up a conversation, he would wholeheartedly reply. Thus, it would appear that he and Lumia were quite compatible.

"Is that so? I'll try the Kirua bean stir-fry next time."

"Oh, I totally recommend it. Actually, would you like try one now?"

"Eh? Is that fine? Wouldn't that be an indirect kiss?"

Placing a finger over her lips, Lumia tilted her head and mischievously giggled.

"Hmpf… It's not like we're kids."

Glen shrugged his shoulders, and pushed the plate across the table.

And Lumia happily took a spoonful and fed it into her mouth.

Affected by Lumia's unrestrained closeness, her ever-present smile, and her warm atmosphere, Glen's lips – without him realizing it – curved into a smile.

"……."

However, the present but uninvolved person was currently exerting a rather depressing presence.

It was Sistina. Rather than joining in on Glen and Lumia's friendly conversation, she had decided to throw a piercing gaze in Glen's direction.

"…Anyway, you over there, is that all you're gonna eat?"

The intense glare was affecting his appetite, so Glen – with a sigh – opted to converse with the culprit. Sistina, who had suddenly been pulled into the conversation, seemed shaken for a moment, but she immediately regained her composure.

"It's not like sensei has the right to complain about what I eat."

"Even if you say that…"

Glen looked at their trays.

Lumia's lunch consisted of a bowl of barley porridge, a bowl of spiced pigeon stew, and a bowl of salad… In comparison to Lumia's filling meal, Sistina's lunch only consisted of two thin red-berry jam scones.

"You, aren't you in your growth period? If you don't eat you're not gonna develop you know?"

Usually, Glen would say 'Well, not like you've developed at all.', but in this situation, he didn't dare to.

"I don't need your concern. The only reason I eat less during lunch is because I would feel sleepy during my afternoon lectures otherwise. After all, I take them seriously."

Sistina turned an eye towards Glen's meal and said:

"Well, not like sensei can relate to that whatsoever."

Due to this provocation, the mood between Glen and Sistina took a turn for worse.

“…My, aren’t you indirect.”

Since Glen was still eating, he had lowered his voice.

A wave of nervousness flew through Sistina, whose provocation had been detected.

“If you have something to say, why not just tell it to me straight?”

“…I understand. It’s not any good for either of us if it continues on like this, so I’ll say it clearly. I—”

Sistina, with a severe expression…

“I get it, I get it alright? I surrender. Can you not show such a desperate expression?”

“…Eh?”

Glen suddenly raised both his hands in the air.

“Even I didn’t think that you wanted it so badly… It’s my loss.”

Facing Sistina, who was stunned at this unexpected reaction, Glen picked up a single Kirua bean, and placed it on her plate.

“Here, you also wanted to try this right? What you wanted to say was, ‘since you have so much, you should give some to me’, right? …Geez, how greedy can you get?”

Glen glanced at Sistina for a moment, and resumed eating.

“…T-, T-, That’s not it-! That’s not what I wanted to say, what I really—”

Realizing Glen’s tremendous misunderstanding, Sistina’s shoulders trembled in humiliation. She slammed the table as she rose from her seat.

However, Glen didn’t seem to mind at all—

“I’ll take this in exchange.”

Stretching his arm across the table, Glen swiftly stabbed one of Sistina’s scones with his fork, and shoved it in his mouth.

“Mm, once in a while, a scone is good too huh…”

“Ah———!? Wha-How could you take that without asking!?”

“Huh, isn’t this equivalent exchange?”

“What—part—of—this—looks—equivalent? What part!? I’m not gonna forgive you anymore! Beg for forgiveness—!”

“Woah-!? That dangerous!? Wha, oi, can you please stay quiet while I’m still eating—!?”

A samurai fight of forks and knives erupted across the table.

The fight attracted a wide variety of painful gazes.

As for Lumia, she could do nothing but witness the situation unfold with a wry smile.

Chapter 2: The Cat and the Dog

Simply put, the temporary instructor named Glen Ryders was unmotivated.

Inheriting the responsibilities of his predecessor, Glen had become the instructor of year two, class two for all required courses. Regardless of whether the course he taught was black magic, white magic, alchemy, summoning, holy literature, magic history, numerology, natural science, rune language, astrology, reagent studies, magic battle-tactics or magic tool creation… he would go about it in an arbitrary manner. No one knew why he decided to do such a thing, but everyone had the feeling that he was doing this on purpose.

Basically, in this academy that was filled to the brim with passion for magic and permeated with curiosity of the unknown, Glen was the only outlier.

As a result, great conflicts often arose between Glen, the students, and other professors. In particular, the class leader– Sistina – would 'have a word' with him every single day. Despite this, Glen's attitude did not improve, but rather it was getting worse with each passing day.

In the beginning, Glen would occasionally explain some concepts from the textbook, and write down some important points on the blackboard; Lecture-like things. However, he seemed to have grown weary of this after a short while. So after that, he began to copy the textbook word for word on the blackboard. Then, when he grew tired of this, he simply ripped the relevant page of the textbook and taped it to the wall.

And finally, when he found even this task too troublesome, he decided to nail the textbook directly to the blackboard. By then, Sistina could no longer withhold her rage.

A week had passed since Glen began instructing, and this was his final lecture of the day.

“Can you cut it out already!?”

Sistina slammed the table and stood from her seat.

“Hm? Come on, I already dealt with it like you wanted me to right?”

<TL Note: いい加減 has multiple meanings; two of which are ‘Cut it out’ and to ‘get something over with’.>

Glen quickly dismissed Sistina, and continued on with his meddlesome task of nailing the textbook to the blackboard. The manner in which he held the hammer around his shoulder and the nail in his mouth made him seem like a DIY carpenter.

“Don’t use some distorted reasoning like a kid!”

Her rage growing with each step, Sistina marched towards the instructor’s podium.

“Now calm down a lil’ bit, you’ll grow white hair you know?”

“And who do you think made me angry!?”

“Look, your head is full of white hair at your young age… you poor thing.”

“This is silver hair, not white hair! And don’t look at me with such pity Ah, I’ve had enough of this! I didn’t want it to come to this, but if you don’t change your attitude, there are some strings that I can pull that will make you regret your actions.

“Oh? What strings?”

“I am the daughter of the magic house Phebell, which has some influence in this academy. If I had a word with my father, you’d be promptly fired from the academy..”

“Eh…for real?”

“Of course I’m for real! I didn’t want to resort to this kind of method, but if you keep up this attitude during your lectures—”

“Please tell your father I have high expectations for him!”

A sincere smile appeared on Glen’s face.

“—Wh”

Sistina was at a loss for words.

“My—, Thank you thank you! This way I can resign before the month is up! White-haired lady, I give you my sincerest thanks!”

“People like you—!”

Sistina was unable to differentiate whether this man really wanted to quit being a lecturer, or whether he was disrespecting the power of the Phebell family.

In either case, Sistina could not allow herself to overlook Glen’s behavior. In the name of Phebell, she swore that she would not allow the man before her to sully the path of magic and her family name any longer.

Thus she quickly came to a decision. With Sistina’s young age and immaturity pushing her forward—

She removed the glove on her left hand, and threw it at Glen.

“Ow-!?”

The fingers of the glove hit Glen in the face, before promptly falling to the ground.

“Will you accept this?”

In the silence of the classroom, Sistina’s words were sharp and clear.

The students who spectated the situation entered into a state of commotion.

“Are you… for real?”

Glen stared at the ground with an uncharacteristically serious expression.

Lumia hurried to Sistina’s side.

“S-, Sisti! You can’t! Apologize to sensei quickly, and take your glove back!”

However, Sistina refused to budge. Her heated gaze continued to pierce through Glen.

“…You, what do you want out of this?”

Glen narrowed his eyes and returned her gaze.

“I want you to revise your indulgent attitude, and take your lectures seriously.”

“…You don’t want me to resign?”

“If you really wanted to resign as an instructor, then that kind of demand is meaningless.”

“Ah so that’s how it was. What a pity. Since you made a demand, then I can make whatever demand I want you know? Did you forget this?”

“I know.”

Hearing this reply, Glen showed a sour expression. He seemed rather amused by this turnout.

“…You, are you an idiot? As an unmarried lady what are you saying? Your parents are gonna cry you know?”

“Even so, as the next-in-line of the Phebell family, I cannot ignore someone who dirties the path of magic!”

“Ah, it’s so hot… too hot. You…stop…I’ll melt…”

<TL Note: 熱い can stand for both ‘hot’ and ‘passionate’>

Glen pressed his hand against his head, seemingly fed up with the situation.

The onlooking students showed nervous expressions as they watched the scene unfold.

Glen gazed at Sistina. Though Sistina was currently putting up a strong front, in reality, her body had frozen out of anxiety. However, no one could blame her for such a reaction. After all, according to the rules of the magical rite that they would perform, she would have no choice but to accept Glen’s demand, no matter what it was.

Despite all this, Sistina faced Glen directly. In this confrontation, she staked both her conviction towards magic, and the pride of her bloodline. No matter who the judge was at the moment, all would say that Sistina Phebell – despite her young age – was a first-rate magician.

“My oh my, this kind of challenge, this kind of decrepit and outdated antique of a rite still exists huh… Alright then,”

Glen's lips curved into a sneer. He picked up the glove on the ground, and threw it into the air.

"I'll accept this duel."

Then, in an attempt to look cool, he swung his hand up to catch the glove…and failed. With a hint of a foul mood, he picked the glove off the ground once again.

"However, I don't really want to hurt a kid like you, so for this duel, we will only use the spell [Shock · Bolt]. No other spells are allowed. . Got it?"

An audible and synchronized gulp rang through the classroom as Glen explained the rules.

"The rules of the duel are decided by the receiving party, so that's fine by me."

"And, hm, if I win… gimme a moment."

Glen eyed Sistina from head to toe. Then, he leaned his head forward and curved his lips into a crude smile.

"Now that I look closely, you're actually quite the gem. Alright then, if I win, then you'll become my girl."

"—!"

In that moment. In that one instant, Sistina's body shivered; Lumia's complexation turned pale, as if she was unable to breathe.

Sistina was mentally prepared for this kind of demand, however, she couldn't help but feel a bit intimidated when she actually heard it.

"I-, I understand. I'll accept this demand."

Embarrassed by her own reaction, Sistina quickly composed herself as she uttered those words. Despite that, she still felt a bit doubtful, since she couldn't take those words back after saying them.

Glen tried his best to keep a straight face as he saw Sistina desperately try to cover her anxiety and regret behind a strong mask.

Suddenly, he burst out in laughter.

"Wahahahaha-! It's just a prank bro, just a prank! Stop looking like you're going to cry would you?"

“……!”

“I have no interest in kids, so my request is simply for you to stop lecturing me about every little thing. Now then, do you feel relieved?”

Hearing that, Lumia pressed a hand to her chest, and released a sigh of relief.

“Y-…You did that just to make a fool out of me!?”

On the other hand, Sistina, who realized that she had been toyed with, felt nothing but the desire to put down Glen once and for all. Her face was flushed in a state of uncontainable rage.

“Alright, let’s go to the courtyard.”

With that abrupt statement, Glen left the classroom.

“W-, Wait a second! Geez, I won’t forgive you anymore!”

Sistina hastily chased after Glen.

A duel between magicians. This was one of the magical rites that had existed since ancient times.

In reality, magicians were people who investigated the rules of the world, and through which, had managed to obtain great power. Through magic, a fireball could be created to flatten an entire mountain, or a bolt of lightning could be summoned to split the earth. If they were left unrestrained by society, entire nations would surely meet their demise.

That’s why there is an unspoken rule for solving conflicts between magicians; the duel. Since the left hand was closer to the heart, it was the more efficient hand for casting magic. Thus, when the glove on one’s left hand was thrown towards another, it would be seen as challenging another to a duel. If the challenged party decides to pick up the glove, the duel would be established, and if they didn’t pick up the glove, the duel would be called off. In a duel, the challenged party has the right to decide the rules of the challenge. The winner of the duel would be allowed to make one demand of the other party.

As one could see, a duel was far more advantageous for the challenged party. Therefore – unless there was an insurmountable difference in power – it was

uncommon for anyone to ask for a duel. Since ancient times, this was the method that magicians used to settle conflicts amongst themselves.

However, due to the reformation of laws in the modern times, the rite of dueling had become nothing more than a mere formality. Modern magicians no longer needed to settle their differences through dueling, as hiring a lawyer and going to court was a far more efficient and pragmatic method.

Yet, to this day, there were some pure-minded magicians who still insist on enacting this ancient rite.

One, for example, would be the daughter of the revered Phebell magic family, Sistina.

In the academy's courtyard, surrounded by coniferous trees, and standing on the grassy lawn—

Glen and Sistina stood ten paces away from each other and faced off.

"Hey Kaju, who do you think will win?"

"I really want Sistina to win… but her opponent is someone who was strongly recommended by Professor Alfornea…Mm~… What do you think, Sajil?"

When the other students heard that there was a duel between an instructor and student, everyone started to gather around the courtyard. The crowd of students had formed an improvised arena.

"Well then, come at me anytime."

Glen snapped his fingers, and stared at Sistina with a confident expression.

On the other side, Sistina – refusing to relax in the slightest – put up her battle stance. A drop of sweat trickled down her forehead.

The black magic [Shock · Bolt] was the first spell that every student would learn in this academy. The spell fired a line of electricity at a target. Although it was a non-lethal magic that was primarily used for self-defense, it's power was sufficient enough to cause its target to become paralyzed and unable to move..

As long as the incantation was completed properly, a line of electricity would

emerge from one's fingertips. Since [Shock · Bolt] was an extremely simple magic, the one who chanted it faster would win.

"Huh? What's up? Are you not gonna come at me?"

"…Kuh-!"

Generally speaking, magic battles employed a strategy based around counterattacking. This was due to the abundance of counterspells in the modern day.

However, the man named Glen could only use [Shock · Bolt] in this duel, and therefore, this was a contest of raw speed. Despite that, Glen urged Sistina to make the first move.

There was only one way to explain Glen's actions; He had absolute confidence in his casting speed of [Shock · Bolt]. In order words, even if Sistina chanted as fast as she could, Glen would still have the upper hand from cutting segments or stages from his chant.

From this observation, it could be inferred that Glen was probably a magician that specialized in magical combat. If one were to think about it this way, then the academy's appointment of an insincere instructor like Glen would make sense. After all, how could a meritless magician become an instructor at this academy?

The ability to research magic and the ability to utilize magic were two entirely different skills. Looking back at history, there were a lot of low-ranked magicians that had an insurmountable might when it came to a magic battles.

"Oi oi, it's not like I'm gonna eat you or anything. Just come at me however you like alright?"

From his calm demeanor, he seemed like a magician that had experienced a countless number of battles. Even though Glen's behavior was unforgivable, Sistina was beginning to slightly regret her impulsive decision.

But I can't back down now

Sistina glared at Glen, who remained calm and composed.

私が私である以上、
こんな男を野放しにするわけにはいかないわ。
たとえ無様に地を舐めることになっても、
私はこいつに否を突きつける。
それが私の魔術師としての誇り。
……行くわよ！

As long as I am still myself, I cannot allow myself the overlook the actions of this crude man. Even if I have to dirty myself, I will bring judgment upon this man. That is my pride as a magician… Let's do this!

Steeling her resolve, Sistina pointed her finger at Glen and began her chant.

"<*Oh the thunder spirits' lightning*>-!"

In that instant, a shining line of electricity appeared from Sistina's finger, and rapidly approached Glen—

And he proudly received it—

"GYAAA—!?"

A zapping sound reverberated through the courtyard.

Glen's body convulsed, and he fell to the ground with a thud.

"…A-, Huh?"

Sistina remained in place, her finger still outstretched. A sweatdrop could be seen trickling down her forehead.

In front of her was Glen, who lay paralyzed on the ground after being struck by her spell.

"This means…?"

"A-, Ahh…it's Sistina's win…right?"

The spectators of the duel descended into confusion over the unexpected result.

The person who had boldly said those lines and acted so cocky couldn't be this weak right? Was this person really a combat-specialized magician?

"C-, Could… I have possibly broken some rule?"

Seeking some form of explanation, Sistina turned her head towards Lumia. However, Lumia shook her head. She too was perplexed at how the situation turned out.

"H-…How cowardly…"

And then, Glen – having slightly recovered – unsteadily rose to his feet.

“Ah, sensei.”

“You ambushed me before I was prepared…You did that, and you consider yourself a prideworthy magician!?”

“Eh? No, but you said that I could come at you anytime…”

“Well whatever, this is a best out of three anyway, so I’ll give you the first round. That’s enough of a handicap right?”

“Huh? Best of three? Was there a rule like that?”

“Well then let’s go! Round two! This time’ll be a normal showdown-!”

Glen loudly announced the start of round two.

Facing Sistina, who was still confused at this sudden development, Glen made the first move.

“*<Oh thunder spirits · With a shockwave of lightning · Strike—*”

“*<Oh thunder spirits’ lightning>*-!”

Sistina completed her chant before Glen.

“UGYAAa–!?”

Exaggerated zapping sounds escaped from Glen’s body, and he fell to the floor once again. Glen’s body convulsed as he lay on the floor. It was a perfect replica of the initial round.

“N-, Not bad…”

Glen staggered as he stood up. His knees were trembling, and thus, one could tell that he was merely putting up a strong front.

“Uhm… Glen-sensei?”

“Fu. Though this is a best of five, I was playing around a bit too much. I’ll need to reflect a bit.”

“Earlier, you said it was a best of three…”

As Sistina looked at Glen with amazement—

“AHHHHH—!?”

Glen suddenly screamed at the top of his lungs.

“Are you kidding me!? Why is the empress here—!?”

“Eh-!?”

Sistina impulsively looked at where Glen was pointing to.

“Fuhaha, you fell for it dumbo! *<Oh thunder spirits · With a shockwave of lightning · Strike it—*”

“*<Oh thunder spirits’ lightning>*-!”

Despite the situation, Sistina’s chant was still faster than Glen’s.”

“BiGYaaaAa–!?”

Glen rolled on the floor as he was electrocuted.

Sistina pressed on her temples and said:

“Uhm…Could it be that Glen-sensei…”

“G-, Go back to where you were! This isn’t over yet you know!? After all this is a best of seven-!”

“Ha…”

“ *· With a shockwave of lightning · Strike i—*”

“*<Oh thunder spirits’ lightning>*-!”

“ZUgyAAAA—!?”

……

Again, Glen began his chant, and again, Sistina completed hers first.

Again, Glen was sent on a one-way trip to the floor.

And again, this monotonous task continued.

Though Glen had a colorful variety of crazy tactics, Sistina would complete her shortened and simplified chant first, each and every time.

And so, at the end of the best of forty seven…

“Sorry. I can’t go on anymore, please forgive me. I can’t even stand up. Anyhow, if we keep up this stupid play, I might not wake up tomorrow.

“Ha…”

Sistina released a deep sigh as she looked down at Glen’s convulsing body,

“My—, the rule to only use [Shock · Bolt] is really super unfair isn’t it~!? Ah, if only that rule wasn’t there I would’ve won a while ago!”

“You really can’t stop blowing your own horn can you sensei?”

She had already become immune to Glen’s antics.

“By the way, you only used the three-stage chant… Could it be sensei, that you can’t use the one-stage chant for [Shock · Bolt]?”

“Fu, Fuhahaha! I-I don’t know w-w-w-what you’re talking about!? Also, using the one-stage chant for the spell is wrong! It’s disrespectful towards our predecessor’s efforts in crafting the beautiful chant! It’s not like I didn’t do it because I can’t!”

“So you can’t…”

Glen’s appearance was so miserable that even Sistina wanted to cry. She quickly recomposed herself, and returned to the original goal.

“A-Anyway, I won this duel! So sensei, you have to follow my demand starting tomorrow—”

“Huh? What dya’ say?”

“Eh?”

Sistina froze as she heard Glen’s unexpected reply.

“What kind of agreement did we make? I really can’t remember at all~~~. You know, because I was struck by lightning from a certain someone~~?”

The man before Sistina’s eyes was far worse of a person than she had initially imagined.

Sistina was truly infuriated by Glen’s words.

“Sensei… do you mean to break the agreement between fellow magicians!? Do you even consider yourself a true magician!?”

“I mean, I’m really not a magician y’know?”

“Wh…”

Glen announced that without a hint of shame.

Sistina was left at a loss for words.

“It’s pointless to talk about a magicians’ rules to a guy who isn’t a magician alright~. Y’know, I’m kinda distressed about this~”

“You, what are you saying…!?”

Sistina could not understand the man named Glen. She never thought that he – who had been trained and disciplined in magic – would deny that his own magical heritage. Did this man have no pride as a magician!? Does he not have any respect for the magical world, that was filled with endless mysteries and knowledge?

“So, on the account of today’s breathtaking experience, let’s call this a draw! I’ll let you go this time, but there won’t be a next, you got it!? Now farewell! FUWAHAHAHAHAHA—! Guh-!”

Due to the damage from the duel, Glen fell to the floor several times. Despite that, he ran off while laughing impudently .

He left behind an amused audience.

“What was up with that idiot?”

“To think that he isn’t even able to do the one stage chant for a simple spell like [Shock · Bolt]…”

“Fu, that was embarrassing to even watch…”

“Going back on an agreement between fellow mages, what a terrible person…”

As the surrounding people began to criticize Glen, Lumia – with a worried expression – approached Sistina.

“Are you alright, Sisti? Are you hurt anywhere?”

“I’m fine… but”

Though Glen had disappeared from sight a while ago, Sistina looked towards where he left with a stern expression.

“I completely misjudged his character.”

It sounded as if she was talking about someone that harmed her family.

Despite how Sistina acted, she had some respect for Glen; After all, Glen was technically her senior in the study of magic. Though he had a lousy attitude, she thought that, at the very least, she would be able to learn something from him, who was a fellow comrade on the path of magic.

However, this was the last straw. That man could no longer be forgiven, for he had insulted magic. As long as he remained in this academy, he would be her sworn archnemesis.

“Glen-sensei…”

Lumia was at a loss.

Three days after Glen’s infamous dueling incident—

Despite everything that happened, his motivation during his lectures hadn’t changed at all, and the students’ opinion of him only got worse and worse.

Furthermore, it didn’t seem like Glen felt guilty about the incident. He merely continued through his day as he usually would.

Finally, his lectures officially became a free self-study period. With their strong motivation to learn, the students decided that – rather than waste their time listening to Glen’s lectures – it would be far more efficient to study earnestly from the textbook.

Regarding this, Glen didn’t have a single complaint. At some point, this kind of accommodation had become a mutual agreement between him and the students.

“Alright, class is starting~”

As usual, Glen arrived late to the lecture room. With the eyes of a dead fish, he began his unmotivated lecture.

The students sighed to themselves, opened their textbooks, and began to self-study.

While this scene wasn't anything unusual, there were still some energetic and serious students that wanted to learn something from this unmotivated lecturer.

"Ah, uhm…sensei, I have a question about your explanation…"

About thirty minutes after the start of class, a small and petite female student timidly raised her hand. It was the girl that had been brushed off on the first day of class – Rin.

"Ah, what's up? Tell me about it."

"E-Erm…Ah…About the translation for the spell that sensei was talking about…"

As if dealing with a pest, Glen sighed. He dragged himself to the teacher's desk and picked up a book.

"Here, this is a rune language dictionary."

"…Eh?"

"This dictionary orders the rune language rank three and below by the order of their sound. By the way, the order of sound is…"

As Glen began to explain the way to use the rune dictionary, Sistina, who had resolved to cut all ties with Glen, stood up from her seat. Once again, she could no longer overlook his behavior.

"It's pointless Rin, it's a waste of time to listen to that man."

"Ah, Sisti."

Rin, who had innocently asked a question, was now stuck between Glen and Sistina.

"That man doesn't understand anything about the greatness of magic, yet, he decides to mock it. He won't be able to teach you anything."

"B-, But…"

"It's fine, I'll teach you, so let's study together ok? Just leave that man alone. Let's work hard to discover the truth and magnificence of magic, alright?"

Sistina finished comforting Rin, and discarded her smile—

For some reason, the man seemed to be hurt by what she had said.

“Magic… is it really that great and magnificent?”

Glen murmured loudly to himself.

Of course, Sistina would not pretend that she didn’t hear what he had just said.

“Hah, and I thought you were going to say something important. Isn’t its greatness and magnificence a given? Of course, someone like you won’t understand that at all.”

With a sneer, Sistina completed her part.

Usually, the lazy and indulgent Glen would dismiss this by saying ‘Ah, is that so?’, and end the discussion there. However—

“What about it is great or magnificent?”

For some reason, he didn’t abandon the discussion.

“…Eh?”

Sistina was bewildered at Glen’s unexpected response.

“What’s so great and magnificent about magic? Tell me.”

“T-That is…”

Sistina felt slightly irritated at her inability to form a convincing response. In truth, she herself, and the people around her, had simply repeated the phrase ‘Magic is great and magnificent’ without really thinking about it. However, she did not want to admit that.

“Come on, enlighten me.”

But that was not the only reason for her admiration towards magic. Taking a deep breath, Sistina formulated an argument. Then, with an air of confidence, she said: “Magic is the pursuit of the reality of the world.”

“…Hm?”

“The origins of the world, the structure of the world, the rules that govern the world – all of it can be explained through magic. It is the way through which we

answer the eternal question of ‘why does the world and its people exist?’, and is also the way in which we may evolve into a higher form of existence. Magic is a methodology through which man can approach the gods. That is why magic is great and magnificent.”

Sistina felt that her response was more than satisfactory.

However, she did not expect Glen’s reply.

“…And how can it be used? Magic I mean.”

“Eh?”

“What I mean is, how can magic be used after we bring the mysterious truths of the world to light?”

“D-, Didn’t I say that already!? So that we can become a higher existence…”

“What do you mean by higher existence? God?”

“…About that—”

Sistina trembled in frustration at her inability to answer Glen’s question.

Glen, with an expression of annoyance, continued his inquiry.

“Anyway, how has something like magic brought welfare to the masses? For example, medical techniques can be used cure others of sickness, and metallurgy techniques can be used to create steel, right? If we didn’t have agricultural techniques, many people would die from starvation; and if we didn’t have construction techniques, many people would be unable to live leisurely. You see, the things in this world that are labeled ‘techniques’ are used to improve the welfare of the masses, yet, magical techniques aren’t used in such a way. Could it be that I’m the only one who thinks this way?”

<TL Note: ‘Magic’ is written as 魔術, 術 stands for technique.>

Glen wasn’t wrong. The only people that benefited from magical techniques were the magicians themselves. Since the masses were unable to use magic, they could not benefit from it. Though that was just stating the obvious, it was the primary reason that magical techniques were not applied to benefit the lives of the masses.

Furthermore, whilst the ideology of ‘unraveling the hidden mysteries of magic’ was one that every magician shared, pursuing such an ideology yielded no benefit for the masses. Therefore, to the masses, this kind of ideology was nothing more than a display of stubbornness. For most people, magic was a devilish, frightening, perhaps even occult power. Magic was something that the masses would never come into contact with, much less experience.

The harsh reality was that magical techniques were of no practical use to the people. Though this statement may have come from a rather extreme perspective, it was the undeniable truth.

“Magic… is not something that is used for a lowly purpose like ‘for the people’. It is used to discover the true meaning behind the existences of man and earth…”

“However, if it has no practical use, then isn’t it nothing more than a mere hobby? It’s a tedious task that brings no benefit to the people, therefore it is nothing more than self-satisfaction. Magic is nothing more than something we do for pleasure, am I wrong?”

Sistina gritted her teeth in frustration, yet she could not bring herself to object anything that Glen said. How could she be unable to respond to this kind of secular reasoning? Did she lose to the pressure behind Glen’s words?

As the next-in-line of the prestigious Phebell family, Glen was currently refuting the meaning of her life – which was devoted entirely to magic – yet she could not find the words to deny Glen’s claim.

His firm ideology was nothing less than an indisputable fact.

Cowed, Sistina could do nothing but shake in remorse…

“Sorry, I was lying. After all, there is a brilliant way to use magic.”

“…Eh?”

Sistina’s reaction towards Glen’s sudden change of heart was a given, but even the observing students – who overlooked the situation with bated breaths – opened their eyes wide in surprise.

However—

“Ah, an amazing way in which magic can be used… is killing.”

Seeing Glen’s cold and emotionless eyes, and hearing the brutal argument that made itself known through his crooked lips, the students all froze in fear.

Glen’s presence… was the exact opposite of his slothful self.

“In reality, nothing beats magic when it comes to murder you know? In the time in which a sword can kill one person, magic can kill several dozen. Heck, one squadron of magicians can easily annihilate an entire division of elite soldiers. You see, isn’t this a brilliant way to use magic?”

“Stop kidding around!”

Sistina couldn’t pretend that she hadn’t heard what Glen said. It’s fine if he called magic worthless, but it was unacceptable for it to be called a method to commit devilish deeds.

“Magic isn’t something like that! Magic is—”

“Look at the current situation of this country would you? It’s called a ‘great nation of magic’, but what does this mean to other nations? Why do you think that dangerous group called the Imperial Court Magicians get a massive amount of national funding every year?”

“T-, That is—”

“Why does this ‘duel’ thing that you love so much have those kinds of rules? Why do you think that most of the elementary level spells that you learn here are offensive-type magic?”

“That’s—”

“What did the magic that you love so much do during the ‘Magic Wars’ two hundred years ago? What did it do during the ‘Holy War’ forty years ago? Do you know about the atrocities that were committed using magic in the recent years? Do you know how many of these atrocities happen in our nation each year?”

“—!”

“Now look, in both the past and the present, magic and murder have had an undesirable but inseparable relationship. ‘Why’ you ask? Rather than for the sake of the people, a bastard technique like magic evolves and develops only for

the sake of killing people!”

Glen’s conclusion was rather extreme. While it was true that magic was one of the many ways to harm others, at the same time, that was not the only way to use magic.

However, in contrast to Glen’s usual idiotic expression, his current expression was seething with overwhelming hatred. The pressure behind it silenced the students, and none of them dared to utter a single word.

“Geez I don’t get you people at all. You guys are trying your best to study a technique that isn’t useful for anything other than killing you know? Instead of wasting your time doing this kind of thing, why don’t you guys seriously—”

A ‘slap’ cleanly resounded through the room—

Sistina, who had walked up to Glen, had slapped his face.

“Ow… you damn-!?”

“No…That…Magic isn’t… like… that…”

Noticing that Sistina had begun to cry at some point, Glen went silent.

“Why…did you…say such cruel things…? I hate… people like-”

Sistina ran out of the room as she wiped her tears on her sleeves.

All that was left in the room was an oppressive silence.

“—Tch.”

Glen scratched his head and clicked his tongue.

“Ah—, I don’t really feel like it anymore. Well then, today’s class is self-study.

He released a heavy sigh and left the classroom.

That day, Glen didn’t appear for the rest of his classes.

Afterschool. The sky was dyed with the gentle colors of twilight.

After the incident involving Sistina in the morning, Glen had ditched the rest of his classes, and spent the rest of the day on the academy’s rooftop. In this manner, he had wasted the entire day doing nothing in particular.

"…As expected, this really doesn't suit me."

He leaned on the metal railing, and looked blankly into the distance.

Just like before, Glen could see the entirety of the academy from the fifth floor of this luxurious building. The complex scenery of the campus was composed of the stone pavements, the floating courtyard, the ancient city-like other buildings, the medicinal garden, the mysterious forest, and the ancient ruins. There was also the transfer tower; a manmade construct whose juxtaposition with the natural scenery evoked a sense of marvel. Finally, there was also the phantasmal city that floated in the sky.

"Well, there's no way this would suit me, I mean, getting someone who hates magic to become a magical instructor? What kind of stupid joke is that?"

Glen thought about the silver-haired girl that he gotten involved with ever since he became an instructor.

Her name was… what was it again…? It's was… it was Sis…ah I don't remember. Well, not like it matters anyway.

"Man, that white-haired girl slapped me hard… Good grief, she was that rude since the first day huh…"

If I remember correctly, I first met her when I crashed into her at the crosswalk.

"…Just what's so great about magic? Is she an idiot?"

I only knew her for ten days, but I get that she's really serious about magic. For the sake of learning about magic, she studies tirelessly and diligently day in and day out— but's she's blind to the dark and dangerous side of magic. All she admires is the 'magnificent' side of it. Things like 'the truth of the world' are just for self-satisfaction… In the end, she's just a kid. But if I call her a kid, what would that make me, who snapped at a kid?

"…A kid as well."

Maybe some part of me really admires that silver-haired girl. I admire her firm belief in the wonders of magic, and her willingness to devote the entirety of herself to researching it— Because I don't have a passion for anything.

“As I thought, I shouldn’t be here huh…”

To be honest, Glen no longer had the confidence to say those kinds of things to her again. Since he had a deep hatred for magic, he really didn’t care about what he said, but in the end, it wasn’t a good thing to vocalize this hatred in the presence of those that think otherwise. He could at least understand that much.

“I feel bad for Serika, but…”

Glen took out an envelope from his pocket. Inside was his resignation letter. It was a letter that Glen had written in secret, knowing that he probably wouldn’t be able to last a month.

At this moment, Glen had decided that he would somehow force Serika to support him for the rest of his life.

“Alright, when I get home I need to start practicing my dogeza. When Serika gets home, I’ll do everything I can to beg for her forgive me… forgive me for being unemployed for the rest of my life that is!”

As Glen separated his back from the railing – now possessed by the worst kind of motivation—

“Hm?”

On either side of the main building were the east and west academic halls. So Glen – who was on the roof of the east academic hall – had a clear view t of the western hall.

He noticed a silhouette moving in one of the rooms through the window.

“…What’s that?”

That room is the magic experimentation lab if I remember correctly, but there shouldn’t be any students there at this time.

“*<Lead what is afar to here · My eyes that have become sagacious · Shall peer into the distance.>*”

Glen closed his eyes and chanted the three-stage incantation for farsight magic—the Black Magic [Accurate · Scope]. In the next moment, the interior of the lab was projected on Glen’s closed right eyelid. It was as if he himself was inside the lab.

Inside was a lone girl.

“That gold-haired girl is…”

I remember now. It was the girl that was always stayed around that silver-haired girl like a little pup. If I remember right, that silver-haired girl called her Lumia.

“What is she doing there at this time of the day?”

Lumia was looking at the textbook. Using it as a reference, she used mercury to draw a circle on the floor, and a pentagram inside it. Then, she wrote runic words both inside and outside of the pentagram, and placed a magic crystal catalyst at the spiritual point of the formation.

It looked like Lumia was practicing how to draw magical circles.

“Hm? A revolving pentagram… that is… kinda nostalgic. I guess that’s a magic circulation formation?”

The magic circle wasn’t anything special. It was a simple formation that allowed one to see the flow of magic as it traveled through the formation. Though it was useful for understanding the concept, it was used solely for educational purposes. Formulating this magic circle without the use of reference material was proof that one had grasped the basics of magic circle creation.

“However, that’s no good… the seventh spirit point is open you know? Ah… the mercury spilled out… wha, that’s not the place where you put the catalyst… Oh, it seems like she finally noticed.”

It was as though he was looking at his past failures.

“Now that I think about it, when I was a kid, Serika and I used to play around with this a lot.

Thinking back, this was the first magic-like thing that he had performed. Although this was just a simple magic formation that had no effects in particular, for some reason, it made him feel excited when he had performed it as a kid.

Without noticing Glen’s peeping, Lumia continued to persist through trial and error, and finally, her magic circle was complete. Then, she chanted the activation spell, but the circle didn’t activate. Lumia tilted her head in

puzzlement.

“Id-iot. That’s not enough for it to activate.”

Lumia compared the reference in the textbook to the formation countless times, and after a few adjustments, she chanted the spell again. Once again, the circle failed to activate, and she dropped her shoulders in defeat.

“…What a fool.”

Glen couldn’t bear to look any longer, and released his magic. He sighed and left the rooftop.

“Well, keep working hard, young one.”

Bang!

Lumia jumped in surprise as the door to the magic experimentation lab was flung open.

“G-, G-Glen-sensei!?”

On the other side of the door was Glen, who showed a neutral expression.

“This place is just as messy as before eh?”

He looked around the room as he murmured to himself.

It was a fairly spacious room. On the racks were skeletons, vials of lizard parts, magic crystals, and variety of other magical reagents. On the table was a parchment with a magic circle inscribed on it, a laboratory flask, and a piece glassware that twisted around like a coffee siphon. Further into the lab was a set of magic furnaces and an alchemical cauldron. Smelling the strange scent of the room, Glen felt a bit nostalgic.

“W-, Why are you here…?”

“That’s my line. Using the magic experimentation lab without authorization is a violation of basic principle you know?”

Glen felt that what he said was rather shameless. To turn in his resignation letter to the headmaster, he had to pass by this room; And as he passed by, he – for one reason or another – decided to take a peek through the gap of the door.

As expected, Lumia had yet to find success and was in a state of distress. By then, without realizing it, he had flung open the door.

“I-, I’m very sorry about this! Actually, I’m not very good at magic formations, and haven’t been able to follow the recent lectures… Sistina usually teaches me how to do this, but she disappeared today… Since I wanted to review the topic… uhm…”

“So you snuck in here? But this room has a magic lock, so how did you get in here?”

“Eh, hehe… I kind of snuck into the office and…”

Lumia playfully stuck out the tip of her tongue, and took out the key.

“…You’re unexpectedly naughty aren’t you?”

Glen shrugged his shoulders in a somewhat surprised manner.

“Sorry, I’ll clean up right now! You can scold me all you want afterwards alright!?”

As she frantically turned around to clean up, Glen grabbed her arm.

“Sensei?”

“It’s alright. Just see this through to the end, I mean, you’ve gotten this far already haven’t you? It would be a shame to erase it now, right?”

“B-, But… It didn’t really work…and I was about to give up anyway…”

A depressed sigh escaped Lumia’s lips.”

“I wonder why it didn’t work? …It worked last time so… And I didn’t get the steps wrong either…”

“Idiot. You just didn’t add enough mercury.”

“Eh?”

Glen picked up a jar of mercury and walked up to the formation. He raised the jar in the air, as if he was pouring wine, and squinted his eyes to inspect the formation. Then, he tilted the jar slightly, and without faltering, he poured the mercury. It trickled onto the formation in a fine line.

Suddenly, Glen's hand began to move quickly. With mechanical precision, the line of mercury flowed cleanly onto the lines of the formation. There was not a single trace of doubt or hesitation in his movements.

"…Amazing."

Lumia's eyes widened, and she held her breath as she looked at Glen's movements.

"Those who get a teensy bit used to this begin to save too much on the ingredients, and as a result, the flow of magic through the formation is occasionally short-circuited."

Glen put the jar down, and re-wore his left glove. Then, he placed his index finger on the mercury formation, and with deft movements, he shifted the mercury around in order to repair the essential parts of it.

"Despite how much attention you guys pay to things you can't see, you guys fail to notice the things that are right in front of you. This is proof that you guys think too highly of magic… There we go."

Glen stood up, and threw aside his left glove.

"Try activating this again. Say the full five verses written in the textbook. Don't try to cut out anything alright?"

"Y-Yes."

Lumia walked up to the formation again. After a deep breath, she began her chant. Her refreshing voice made it seem like she was singing instead.

" "

In that instant, the formation became white hot, and the room was enveloped by a white light.

"—!"

Finally, when the light faded, the magic circle was activated with a high pitched ring. The unrestrained flow of magic through the circle emitted seven colors of light.

The seven lights that shone on the mercury created an illusory spectacle.

It was a mysterious visage—

Above all, it was an innocent and beautiful sight.

“Uwah… how pretty…”

Lumia stared at the spectacle, seemingly moved by it.

“My my… are you really moved by something like this?”

Glen coolly glanced at the formation.

“After all… I’ve never seen anyone’s magic circle glow so brilliantly… It was minutely detailed yet so strong… You’re amazing sensei…”

“Don’t be dumb, I mean, anyone can do something like this. In any case, most of the work was done by you, so it was probably due to the quality of the ingredients and catalysts that you prepared. Surely…”

“…Sensei?”

Lumia noticed Glen leaving the room.

“I’m going home.”

“Ah…P-, Please wait a moment!”

Lumia frantically pulled on Glen’s sleeve.

“…What is it?”

It seemed that Lumia pulled on Glen’s sleeve without thinking, and her eyes appeared to turn monochromatic as she lost herself in thought.

“Uuhm…Right, sensei, are you going home now?”

“Hm? …I guess so.”

I was actually gonna go to the headmaster’s office to turn in his resignation letter, but I don’t really feel like going today. Well, I could always just do it tomorrow.

“Then, could I accompany you for a bit?”

“…Wha?”

Towards Lumia’s unexpected proposal, Glen raised an eyebrow.

“Uhm… I wanted to talk with sensei.”

“Well I don’t want to.”

Glen mercilessly shot her down.

“Is that so…”

Lumia, depressed, lowered her head and shoulders. Somehow, the way she looked gave off the impression of a dog being forsaken by its owner.

“I said that I don’t want you to accompany me, but…”

Glen felt a bit sorry. He felt like had seen an abandoned and pitiful dog, and now he couldn’t take his mind off it after leaving it behind. And so he muttered — “if you want to follow me then do as you please.”

“Ah, …Thank you very much, sensei! Well, it’s slightly regretful, but please wait

for a moment while I clean everything up, ok!?”

Lumia smiled happily, and hurriedly move to clean the room.

Seeing Lumia’s innocent behavior, Glen shrugged his shoulders.

My my…

“Uwah! Sensei, look at that!”

As the two walked on the main street of Fejiti after leaving the academy, they could clearly see the phantasmal castle in the sky.

The seemingly endless downhill street allowed a broad view of the sky and the town, and from here, one could see the entirety of the sky castle. Dyed by the pink sky of the sunset, the dignified castle shined like a golden flame. If anything, the sunset served to magnify its majesty.

“My friend really likes that castle. While I don’t have any interest in unlocking that castle’s secrets… after seeing how grandeur and pretty it looks… How should I say this? I would also like to go to that castle someday.”

“…I see?”

Unlike Lumia, whose face was hot with excitement, Glen’s replies were cold and uncaring.

“It’s because of that castle that there are idiots that misunderstand the essence of magic. Geez, I can’t help but feel depressed thinking about it.”

“Sensei?”

Despite what Glen muttered, he was not criticizing anyone in particular, rather, those words seemed to be directed towards himself.

“Come on, stop looking around and let’s go.”

“Ah, alright…”

Glen stepped forward. Lumia hurriedly moved to follow him.

In this manner, two of them walked together along the street.

While it could be said that they were walking ‘together’, the reality of the

situation was that Glen was walking ahead without a hint of courtesy, and Lumia was desperately trying to match his pace.

Although the street wasn't quite as packed as it was in the afternoon, there were still a fair bit of people walking on the streets. Glen acted as if he was alone, and set his mind on avoiding the crowd of people.

"Sensei… you actually like magic don't you?"

Lumia, who was walking alongside Glen, suddenly posed such a question.

"Why would you think that?"

"No, Uhm… That's because when sensei was helping me with the magic circle… you looked like you were really enjoying it."

Glen was at a loss for words.

I looked like I was enjoying it? Did I really show a happy expression? Just because I performed some magic?

"Hah… no way."

Glen chose to avoid the question by laughing.

"You should know this by now, but I really hate magic. I wouldn't enjoy something like that."

"Hehe, is that so?"

However, Lumia gently smiled with a knowing expression.

Glen felt like he had been seen through. To him, this was a quite the unsavory development.

"But… Even if Sensei really hates magic, what you said today was too much you know? Sisti… You made someone like Sistina cry."

So the name of that silver-haired girl seems to be Sistina.

"Apologize to her tomorrow alright? For Sistina, magic is an important bond between her and her grandfather. More than anything, Sistina really loves and respects her grandfather, who was a famous magician… 'To someday become a great magician that won't lose to my grandfather'… That was the promise she made with her grandfather before he passed away."

“…I see. So I guess I did something terrible huh.”

Even if it was indirect, if I call someone whom they respect worthless, then anyone would be angry.

“That aside, what’s this? Did you invite me to walk with you so you could lecture me?”

“Ah, no… that’s part of it, but it’s not like that…”

As if rearranging her thought, Lumia stayed silent for a while after that.

“Uhm… could I ask you something?”

“It depends on what you’re asking.”

“Erm… Before you became an instructor at the academy, what were you doing?”

As if he had prepared his response in advance, Glen took a deep breath, proudly stuck out his chest, and announced.

“I was a NEET parasite.”

“Eh? A NEET? A parasite?”

“There’s a girl with a lot of authority in the academy named Serika right? She took care of me like a mother would when I was small, and borrowing that connection, I had her raise me all the way till now. Heh, amazing right?”

“A-, Ahaha…. Why are you so proud about it…?”

Lumia had no choice but to show a wry smile.

“But that’s a lie right?”

As to why she could refute him with such confidence, Glen felt a bit troubled.

“I’m not lying alright? Do I look like the kind of person who could work seriously? Serika provided for me for the past year you know?”

“One year… Then what did you do before that?”

“…Ah—, sorry, I just wanted a sound a bit cooler. To be honest, Serika provided for me ever since I graduated from the academy. My personality isn’t really suited for working you see, so ever since then, I’ve been searching for my

true self or something like that…”

As if unwilling to accept such an answer, Lumia continued to stare at Glen.

“Ah—, that’s the end of unburying my dark history. The end! It’s my turn to ask you alright!?”

Although he wasn’t interested in Lumia, there was no other choice. He desperately wished to move away from the topic of his past.

“You guys, why do you pursue magic so desperately? Whether it’s that Sistina person or you, aren’t you guys a bit too serious about magic?”

“About that…”

“I said in class today that ‘magic is really just a meritless technique’ right? Even if we didn’t have it, there won’t be any real inconveniences, I mean, the more we use it, the worse things get. Why do you guys go so far out on your own volition?”

Although Glen had only asked the question to change the topic, the girl named Lumia – in a manner beyond his expectations – was pondering the question seriously. After thinking about it for a brief moment, she said: “I don’t understand the motivation that pushes others to study and research magic… but I have my own reasons to study magic.”

“Hmm, Is it ‘that’? That thing about finding the truth of the world, or the origin of human evolution?”

“Ahaha, that’s not the case. After all, I won’t be able to work towards that kind of noble cause.”

“…Hm?”

For the first time, Glen had interest in this girl named Lumia.

“Well then, what motivates you to learn magic?”

“Let’s see… I want to use magic to help the people in the truest sense of word. For that purpose I want to deepen my understanding of magic.”

Glen felt that her words were an indirect criticism of his feelings of rejection towards magic.

“My my, are you trying to say that ‘the way to use power lies in the hands of the holder’? Something like ‘the sword does not kill people, people kill people’?”

“Yes, but… my belief is just a bit different from that.”

“?”

“Just like how you said today, sensei, magic that could bring harm to the people is better off not existing. If magic didn’t exist, then there wouldn’t be people hurt by magic. However, magic is definitely something that exists.”

“… I guess.”

“Under the pretense that it already exists, then it is unrealistic to hope for it to not exist. If that’s the case, then we have no choice but to think of ways in which we can prevent magic from hurting people.”

“……”

“But if we don’t understand magic, then we will never manage to find such a way. If we don’t understand magic, then it will forever be labeled as an unknown devil’s sorcery, a criminal practice, or a tool to kill people.”

“Basically… what you’re saying is that, rather than turn our eyes away from magic, we should wisely find the correct way to control it, right? That we should mobilize all the magicians for such a purpose, right?”

“Yes. Though, what I don’t know is how a mediocre magician like me can achieve such a thing…”

“You, so you want to be something like… an official in the ministry of magic, or a magic sheriff?”

“Eheh, I suppose so. To walk along the path I wish… That is my goal.”

Glen sighed, and tried to remonstrate this naïve girl.

“I’m just gonna say this, but it could all end in vain you know? No, if you work hard you could probably become and official, but your goal is too high of a hurdle. The darkness within magic isn’t something that one person could change.”

“I understand, but even so…”

“Why? Why do you choose to go down this unrewarding path?”

When Glen asked, Lumia showed a gentle smile towards him for some reason. Then, she looked into the distance with a nostalgic expression.

“I… have someone I want to repay someday.”

“Repay? What about that?”

“This was around three years ago. Back then, I was banished from my family due to some circumstances, so I moved into Sisti’s home. Something happened shortly after that, and my life was threatened by a group of evil magicians…”

“Despite how you look, you’ve lived a hard life huh? Anyway, did you say that you were banished by your family…? You, could it be that you’re the daughter of some powerful noble!?”

“Ah, no that’s not it! I don’t come from that kind of exaggerated family! Honestly! We were just poor! Poor!”

Lumia frantically thrust her arms forward to deny.

However, while it was normal for poor families to abandon their children during hard times, it certainly wouldn’t be called “banished”.

“Wait a sec… Now that I look closely, you…”

Glen appeared to have suddenly remembered something, and began to stare intently at Lumia’s face. The way he squinted his eyes made it seem like he was trying to look at something far away.

“…Sensei? Is something the matter?”

Then Lumia, with an expectant expression, returned Glen’s gaze.

However—

“Ah no, it’s nothing… then? What happened after that?”

As if he wanted to say ‘how could that be possible’, Glen shook his head.

A trace of disappointment could be felt in Lumia’s sigh. Then, she continued her story.

“Back then, I felt insecure after being banished from my previous family…

Thinking ‘why does this always happen to me?’ I cried and cried, and then I gave up… but then, a magician appeared from nowhere and saved me in the nick of time.”

“The heck is that? That guy was totally looking for that timing, and was totally just trying to look cool.”

“Back then, I was really afraid of the person who killed the evil magicians one by one in order to protect me. That person himself also said that it was his job to kill those magicians, yet every time that person killed someone, they showed a pained expression… Even so, that person fought to the end for the sake of protecting me. Even though that person did all that, I was so scared that I wasn’t able to thank them…”

“Ha—h.”

“Though I only met that person for a short time… I really thought that they were truly kind at heart. That’s why – even though they were hurt by what they did – they could continue to fight for the sake of someone else. As long as evil magicians don’t exist… that person won’t have to show such a sad expression ever again…”

“Ha—h.”

“That person saved my life. This time, I want to be the one to help him. I want to be to be in a position to guide those who are led astray from the path of magic back onto the right path, and in order to do that, I need to deepen my understanding of magic. If I can walk along this path… then someday, I will give my thanks to that person… That person, who showed me the light as I was alone in the darkness.”

Hearing what Lumia said, Glen’s shoulders began to tremble. Then finally, he burst into laughter.

“Ku-, ku-, ku-… Isn’t this too much? This kind of shocking development that surpasses those of popular fiction won’t sell you know? I mean, isn’t this a bit too cliché?”

“Perhaps, hehe. But isn’t there also saying where ‘reality is stranger than fiction’?”

Even though her firm beliefs were just laughed at, Lumia showed a gentle smile.

“Hah, that kind of saying doesn’t exist.”

After that, the two of them didn’t talk about anything in particular.

As usual, Glen walked at his own pace, and Lumia – who was in a good mood for some reason – chased after him like a little pup. Repeating this cycle, the two finally arrived at the crossroads where the two had first met.

“Ah sensei. I’m going this way, since I’m living at Sisti’s house right now.”

“Is that so? Well then, be careful on your way home.”

“I’ll be fine alright? It’s really close to here after all.”

“I see, but you never know when something’s gonna happen, so just be careful alright?”

“Hehe sensei, despite the way you act, you’re a worrywart aren’t you?”

“Idiot, that just means you’re someone I have to worry about.”

“Ahaha, I’ll be careful. Well then sensei, see you tomorrow!”

“…Mm.”

Glen – for no reason in particular – gazed at Lumia’s back as she ran off into the distance.

She turned around several times on the way, and happily waved her hand at him.

“…Is she a dog?”

He said so without any real intent, but it seemed to have led him to a rather interesting revelation.

If Lumia was a dog, then the girl called Sistina would be a cat. Ahh, I see, I get it now, that kind of haughty and dishonest attitude is totally like a cat…

And so, Glen ruminated over these pointless thoughts.

“But huh… despite how she looks, she really thought it through… that girl…”

For a while now, Glen had been thinking about what Lumia said.

“…‘No choice but to think’…huh…”

Glen took the envelope out of his pocket, and raised it into the air, as if he was trying to see through it.

“Now then… what am I gonna do…?”

Chapter 3: Just a Little Bit of Motivation

The next day, before the lecture bell rung—

Ignoring Lumia who enthusiastically reviewed the class materials, Sistina blankly stared out the window towards the ‘Sky Castle Melgarius’ that floated above Fejiti.

Despite it being the iconic symbol of the town of Fejiti, no one understood why it was there, or when it had come to existence. During the brief amount of free time before class, she would always look at the floating castle in wonder. For Sistina, looking at the mysterious visage in the sky had already become a habit.

……

……

[Look, my cute Sistina. That is the ‘Sky Castle Melgarius’ you see?]

Was it because that lousy instructor had insulted her esteemed grandfather?

Sistina’s mind was filled with these nostalgic memories.

[How is it? Isn’t it beautiful? That castle has been floating in the sky since a time beyond which we can comprehend. Yes, several hundred years… several thousand years… perhaps since forever and ever…]

Sistina remembered clearly. Whenever she mentioned the sky castle, her grandfather’s eyes would light up in excitement.

[Hahaha, though everyone calls me a great an accomplished magician… the reality is not quite so. The reason I began to research magic… Yes, it was all for the sake of entering that castle, even if it was only a single step. At one point, I want to see all of its magnificent glory. At another, I want to unlock the unknown mysteries that have been left untouched for thousands of years. That is my only reason for pursuing the path of magic.]

Even though his appearance had eroded through the years. , his current expression made him seem like a young, dreaming boy—

[Some say that the castle is the remnant of a foregone advanced magic civilization. Others say that the castle is the throne of the gods that created this earth. According to certain legends, inside that castle lies the key to understanding everything in this world. If that was true, then who created that castle? And for what reason does it exist in the distance… The greatest mystery of the world floats above my very head. Even if I think about it, I can feel the romance of it all flowing through me… As a magician, how could I not challenge this mystery?]

Sistina loved to hear her grandfather talk about his observations, theories, and research.

However… during his later years, his legs and hip became weak, and his body refused to move the way he wanted to. When Sistina heard him speak during those times, she couldn't help but get the feeling that he was truly miserable.

"I want to set foot on it". "I want to see it once"; all these dreams came to be spoken in past tense.

The substance-less castle, which you could do nothing but look up to.

Even the hope of borrowing the power of magic to one day fly to that distant castle, disappeared as if awaking from a dream.

Since it was always in sight, what he awoke to was nothing but a cruel reality.

Her grandfather in his later years had realized this—

There was no way that he would be able to step foot in that castle.

—Has grandfather given up?

Sistina couldn't resist the urge to ask her grandfather that. Thinking back, it was a very cruel question.

[…It is regretful. There are many things that we are unable to do in one lifetime you know? …My father, my grandfather, my great grandfather, they all… were unable to find a way to that castle…ah-]

However, her grandfather had gently rubbed her head.

[It was truly…a shame…]

He said.

With a nostalgic gaze, he looked at the floating castle in the sky as if looking at the sun.

The clear blue sky. The radiant and blinding sun. All of them gathered together to make the half-transparent castle clearly visible.

In that moment, the magnificent castle – and the visage of her grandfather looking upon it – captured Sistina's very soul.

Her grandfather's back felt so distant and his gaze looked so painful—. At the same time, the phantasmal castle in the sky looked so radiant and beautiful—. That was why, on that day, in that moment, her grandfather's dream became her dream.

—If that's the case, I will be the one to do it—

—I will become a great magician that can stand above my grandfather—

—In place of my grandfather, I will unlock the mysteries of the 'Sky Castle Melgarius'—

……

……

"Oi, white cat."

Suddenly, an indifferent voice descended from above her head.

Sistina jumped upright in her seat in surprise, and her consciousness returned back to the present world. However, she understood without needing to turn her head to look. The man standing beside her was that detestable temporary instructor.

"Oi, can you hear me white cat? Give me a response."

"W-, White cat? By white cat do you mean me…? W-, What is that supposed to mean!?"

Sistina slammed the desk and stood up from her seat. She glared at Glen and said:

“Don’t treat people like animals! I have the name Sistina—”

“Shush, just listen to what I have to say. I have something to say to you about what happened yesterday.”

“W-, What about it!? You’re gonna continue!?”

Sistina straightened her body. Her hostility could be felt in her gaze.

“Do you want to argue with me that badly!? Do you want to call magic something useless again!? If that’s the case, I—”

In terms of speaking and reasoning ability, he has the upper hand. If we entered a debate I wouldn’t be able to win, but even so, I can’t back down. I’m carrying my grandfather’s dreams after all.

As Sistina resolved to resist whatever Glen intended to say, regardless of the evident result—

“…About what happened yesterday, sorry about that.”

“Eh?”

Then, hearing something completely unexpected, Sistina froze in place.

“Well, uh, how should I say this… I guess people have things that are important to them… right? I really hate magic, but… uhm, about what I said to you, it wasn’t really logical of me to do that. I mean, what I said was a bit too much, and like, it was kinda childish of me. Well, erm, in the end, I guess it would be that… Sorry about everything.”

Glen showed an unwilling expression, and turned his eyes away. Saying those apologetic words, he bowed his head slightly.

Could he be trying to apologize?

“…huh?”

Ignoring Sistina, who was still in a daze, Glen walked back to the instructor’s podium as though he had just completed some troublesome task.

Anyway, what is he trying to do now? It’s not even time for class, and he arrived to the classroom on time… Something is weird about this.

“What just…? Did something happen…?”

“Wha, huh? What’s come over him?”

“How should I know…”

The students in class who witnessed the scene couldn’t help but feel anxious. After all, Glen of all people had showed up to class on time.

Just what are you planning?

Sistina’s hostility towards Glen was obvious to everyone in the classroom. However, the person in question merely leaned towards the blackboard, closed his eyes, and massaged his shoulders. He completely ignored the doubtful gazes that were being cast upon him.

The bell rung after a short while. In a manner that made people suspect that he would sleep whilst standing, Glen walked up to the instructor’s podium.

However, what he said next was unbelievable.

“Alright, let’s start the class.”

The classroom erupted into a state of commotion. The students of the class all exchanged glances with one another.

“Now then… this is the textbook for spell chant studies… right?”

Glen opened the textbook and flipped through the pages. The sufferable expression on his face increased proportionally to the number of pages flipped. Finally, Glen closed the book, and sighed loudly.

In front of the confused class, Glen drifted to the classroom’s window, opened it, and…

“So-i!”

Threw the textbook out the window.

‘Ah, as I thought, it’s the usual Glen.’ Having become used to Glen’s mysterious antics, the students of the class sighed in disappointment, and resigned themselves to their textbook of choice. It would appear that this class was going to be self-study again.

However—

“Now then, before we start, let me say one thing to you guys.”

Glen returned to the podium, and took a deep breath—

“You guys are really are idiots, aren’t you?”

And promptly spat out such condescending words.

“After witnessing your attitudes during class for the past eleven days, I finally understood. You guys don’t know ja-ck about magic. If you really understood magic, you wouldn’t have asked me to ‘teach me the modern translation of this’ and other stupid questions like that. Nor would you have copied the magic formulas word-for-word from the book.”

The students, who were about to copy from the textbook – quill pens in hand – froze in place.

“I don’t want to be told that by a third rate magician who can’t even do the one-stage chant for a low-level spell like [Shock · Bolt].”

It was unknown who spouted such a thing, but the classroom went silent.

Then, the students in the classroom began to chuckle and laugh.

“Well, to be honest, I don’t want to admit it, but it’s true.”

In a disgruntled manner, Glen turned his head away, and picked at his ear with a finger.

<TL Note: The phrase for ‘begrudging acceptance’ is 耳が痛い (my ear hurts), 耳 stands for ear.>

“It’s regrettable, but despite being a male, my ability to control magic and my sense for simplifying magic is lacking. I suffered a lot as a student because of this you know? But huh… I don’t know who said that, but whoever called [Shock · Bolt] ‘low-level’, listen closely. It’s a shame that you are actually an idiot. I mean, you’ve just proved it yourself didn’t you?”

Hearing what Glen said, the class seemed to be enveloped by an irritated atmosphere.

“Well, whatever. Since you said that, why don’t we talk about the chant for [Shock · Bolt]? It’s a good start for someone of your level after all.”

In reaction to Glen’s contemptful words, the class entered a boisterous state.

“At this point, even if I try to explain an elementary chant like [Shock · Bolt]…”

“My my, we’ve learned everything there is to know about [Shock · Bolt] you know?”

“Here here, this is the chant for the black magic [Shock · Bolt]~, please take a look. This writing here kind of reminds you of the embarrassing poems you wrote during puberty right? Along with that, these digits and symbols here are all written tightly in runic language. They all come together to become what you call a magical formula!”

Glen ignored the provocations and complaints, hoisted the book, and began to talk.

“Since you guys can do the one stage chant, I’m gonna assume you all have the basics like magic control, annunciation technique, breathing control, mana biorhythm adjustment, mental control, and memory technique completely down alright? And by that, I’m also gonna assume you have the magic power and mental capacity of a standard magician. Alright, so based on those skills, you are able to perfectly recite the formula for the magic. Then, once you chant the preset phrases for it – Ah! How mysterious, the magic activated just like that didn’t it? This should be what you call ‘that’, you know ‘learning the spell’ or something like that.”

Then, Glen pointed his left finger towards the wall, and chanted the spell.

“*<Oh thunder spirits · With a shockwave of lightning · Strike it down>*”

A bolt of lightning emitted from his finger, and struck the wall.

The students looked at Glen disdainfully, as he once again performed a three-stage chant. Ignoring them, Glen wrote the incantation that he used on the blackboard in runic language.

“Now then, this is the basic incantation for [Shock · Bolt]. People with decent control and sense can shorten this long phrase to *<Oh the thunder spirit’s lightning>*… Well, you know this already. Then, here is the problem.”

As he wrote on the blackboard, Glen cut up stages of the incantation.

<Oh thunder spirits · With a shockwave · Of lightning · Strike it down>

“Now then, if you use this chant, what will happen? Try to tell me.”

The class entered a solemn silence.

More so than ‘not knowing’, the class became anxiously silent because they didn’t know why Glen would pose such a question.

“As for the conditions of chanting… right. A speed of twenty-four, a sound-level of three and a half, a tension of fifty, and with the mana biorhythm at a starting state… I’ll give you guys a break, and give you these basic conditions. Now, anyone want to answer?”

The class continued to stay silent. Not a single person could answer his problem.

Even the honor student Sistina remained silent. A drop of sweat trickled down her forehead, and she showed a vexed expression.

“Terrible. Is this what you call a wipe?”

“Even if you say that, an incantation that is divided like that doesn’t exist!”

The twin-tailed girl named Wendy slammed the desk and stood up from her seat.

“Gya—HAHAHAHha—!? Stop right there, are you kidding me!? HAHAHAHAHhaahha—!”

She was met with crude and mocking laughter.

“The spell won’t successfully activate using that chant. It will certainly fail in some way.”

The male student, who had the best grades after Sistina – Gabel – stood up. He pushed his glasses upward, and confronted Glen.

“Did you just say, ‘It will certainly fail in some way’!? PUhGy-AHAHAHAHA-!”

“Wh—”

“You know, it’s obvious that it will fail if you take the completed form of a chant and mess with it! What I’m asking is, in what form does that failure appear?”

Gabel looked down in shock.

“There is no way to tell what would happen! The result is completely random!”

Wendy, unwilling to back down, shouted.

“Ra—n—do—m!? Y-, You guys, I gave you such a simple formula to work with, and I even go through the trouble of giving you specific conditions, and you tell me it’s random!? Didn’t you guys say that you’ve completely researched this spell? Do you guys want me die lauHAHAHAHAHAH-! Stop, I can’t take anymore! Save me mama!”

Glen continued to laugh mockingly.

At this moment, the irritation in the classroom reached its peak.

“Well that’s enough. The correct answer is that it curves to the right.”

After falling to his hands and knees due to laughter, Glen said this and stood up. Then, he chanted the four stage incantation. As he had declared earlier, the originally straight bolt, curved to right in a massive arc, and struck the wall.

“After that is…”

<Oh thunder · spirits · With a shockwave · Of lightning · Strike it down>

He added a stage to the incantation written on the blackboard.

“If you use this, the range of the spell should be about one-third of what it was.”

And it turned out to be just as he said.

“And then, if you do this…”

<Oh thunder spirits · With lightning · Strike it down>

He returned the incantation to the original amount of stages, and erased a part of it.

“The power will decrease significantly.”

Saying this, Glen struck one of the students with the spell.

However, the student didn’t seem to feel anything. Rather, it cause the student’s eyes to widen in surprise.

“Well, if you’ve ‘completely researched’ this, you should know at least this

much.”

Glen showed a triumphant expression as he twirled the chalk around his finger.

Though the students couldn’t stand Glen’s attitude, none of them said anything. After all, it was clear that this ‘third rate magician’ named Glen had a better understanding of formulas and incantations than they themselves did.

“Anyway, do you guys understand why this mysterious phenomenon occurs when you memorize the formulas in the book and say a couple of strange phrases? No matter how you look at it, isn’t that a bit weird?”

“T-, That’s because the magical formulas interfere with the rules of the world and ”

Towards Gabel’s makeshift answer, Glen immediately rebutted.

“That’s what’s normally said right? I get it. Well then, what are ‘magical formulas’? These ‘formulas’ are some sequence of words or number or symbols that are made and understood by humans you know? Let’s assume that magic does in fact interfere with the rules of the world. So then, why are magic formulas able to interfere with the world? Furthermore, why do we need to memorize it in order to use it? Finally, why does an incantation that doesn’t seem to have anything to do with the formula activate the magic? Haven’t you thought that this is a bit strange? Well, you probably haven’t anyway. After all, to you guys, the world is ‘something that’s already obvious’.”

What Glen pointed out, was something that all the students – including Sistina – had turned a blind eye on for the sake of their own convenience. After all, as long as one continued to desperately memorize formulas and incantations, one’s breadth of magic would limitlessly increase. All the questions that arose when studying were only limited to those regarding practicality. Overall, the basic principles of magic were secondary to its practical use.

Thus, learning new spells made them feel happy and fueled their pride. For that reason, ‘learning magic’ had become a competition of who could learn the most amount of spells. Since the number of spells learned was proof of one’s prestige, none of them had ever stopped to consider something like ‘why it worked’.

“That’s why, for today, I will be using the incantation for [Shock · Bolt] to teach you the easy-peasy basics of magic formulation and incantation. Well, feel free to go to sleep if you’re not interested.”

However, none of the students in the classroom felt even a trace of drowsiness.

And so, Glen began to review one of two great principles of magic ‘The law of equivalent interaction’.

It was a classical magic theory that described the equivalent interactions between the large universe – the earth; and the small universe – the people. In essence, it was a theory that said that ‘an effect on the earth will be accompanied by an effect on the people’.

“Astrology is a direct representation of equivalent interaction. By observing the movements of the stars, we can determine the destiny of people. Basically, it is a technique that allows us to read what their effect on the earth has on a person. Magic is the complete opposite of that.”

So then, what are magical formulas?

Magic formulas don’t affect the world, they affect the people. By changing the human consciousness at a deeper level, they allow us to intervene with the conclusion of the respective laws of the world. That is the true form of magic.

“Simply put, magical formulas are a super-high level autosuggestion. That’s why, about the cool sounding phrase that ‘Magic is the way we search for the truth of the world’ that you guys like to say so much — it’s wrong. Magic is the study of the cogitation of man.”

In essence, the runic language is the most efficient method – with standard results – that allows people to influence their deeper consciousness through autosuggestion. It is a language used specially for autosuggestion that has been developed through the long history of mankind.

“Hm? Does someone not believe that simple words can influence one’s deeper consciousness? …Man, you guys are troublesome bunch… Oi, white cat over there.”

“Like I said, I’m not a white cat! I have the name Sistina—”

“…I love you. To be honest, I fell for you at first sight.”

“Huh? …Wh…Wh, Whwhwhwh, you, what did you say—!?”

“Alright, pay attention everyone. White cat’s face turned red right? A mere phrase completely affected her entire consciousness didn’t it? Comparatively, the external expressions are easy to control, yet they have been affected to this extent. Then, for our deeper consciousness that is unaffected by reason—KUwAH!? Hey, you idiot! Don’t throw your textbooks!”

“You’re the idiot! You stupid stupid stupid idiot—!”

After a short fuss, Glen, whose face was red in bruises, continued his lecture about formulation and incantations.

“The most important part lies in the formulation and speed. It is the primary method through which you can change your deeper consciousness in the way you want.”

Then, Glen explained that incantations were merely keywords for recalling the related magical formula. Through the keyword, the formula can change one’s deeper consciousness.

“Well, basically, it’s an association game. For example, if you hear ‘White cat girl’, then you will immediately think about her head full of white hair. The same applies to the incantation and the formula. By consolidating the relationship using a chant in runic—Ow!? Hey, I’m begging you, stop throwing those textbooks already-!”

Glen’s face was filled with book inflicted marks.

“Basically, the laws of magic related to incantation and formulation… They are the way through which we understand the syntax, and the way through which we create our formulas. Thus, they are the most important things to know as a magician. Yet, you guys completely ignored this part, and completely set yourselves on translating everything and doing whatever you call learning magic. Heck, even the textbook emphasizes that ‘you don’t need to care about the details, just memorize this’.”

This time, the students could not find a single word to rebut his statement.

“Basically it’s this. Translating incantations and formulas in a manner that is easier to memorize is what you have called ‘an easy to understand lecture’, and desperately copying and memorizing this is what you call ‘learning’, right? Well I

guess that's kinda stupid."

Glen shrugged his shoulders, and breathed out loudly through his nose.

"Now, back to the problem of magical syntax and formulation… To be honest, to completely understand everything about it, your lifespans aren't quite enough… Wait, don't get angry yet. This point is true. No, for real."

Glen, who had been in a commanding position until now, was suddenly at the receiving end of many condemning gazes.

"Like—I—said, I'll teach you the easy-peasy basics right? If you don't understand this, you wouldn't be able to understand the essentials for higher-level magical formulas. Well, if you guys can understand what I'm about to explain…Hmm"

For a short while, Glen pressed his temple in thought.

"*<Well · Just · Paralyze>*"

And then, he slowly chanted this strange incantation.

However, the most surprising thing was that the spell [Shock · Bolt] activated. The student's eyes were all wide in surprise.

"Huh? It's a bit weaker than I thought… Well whatever, does anyone want to learn how to do something even with an improvised and changed incantation like this? Well, your precision will decrease so I wouldn't really recommend it."

The way the students saw Glen in their eyes changed immediately.

"Then after this I will explain basics of syntax and formulation. Well, anyone who's not interested can go to sleep. To be honest, this is a really pointless topic.

However, as expected, none of the students in the room felt a single tinge of drowsiness.

At the same time, somewhere in Fejiti.

"Is the plan going well?"

"Mm, it's going well."

In pitch-black darkness, where not a single strand of light seeped through, a man with a gentle smile on his face replied through half of a gemstone that was pressed against his ear.

“And? What about that professor… Huey Reysen? Where is he right now?”

“Haha, you’re talking about ‘him’? Of course he ‘disappeared’”

“Fu, hahaha, I see, so he ‘disappeared’ huh”

“…Yes. However, the problem is the person that succeeded ‘him’.”

“Are you talking about Glen Ryders? It was within my expectations for them to find a replacement professor, but I never thought they would do so this quickly. I heard it was that witch’s idea.”

“Haha, I suppose things don’t always go according to plan.”

The man shrugged his shoulders and chuckled.

“However, if it’s a magician that was brought in personally by that professor Alfornea… Will everything be okay?”

“As for whether or not Glen will be an obstacle, I believe that he wouldn’t be a problem.”

“Is that so?”

“Ah. About this man Glen. I was wary of him at first since he was someone that was brought in by that witch but after a bit of investigation… there was nothing to write home about. He’s just a third-rank, third-rate magician. He is not a threat to me .”

“If that’s the case, let us…”

“Ah. Let us proceed with our current plan. As we had decided, we shall execute the plan on the day of the magic assembly that was mentioned earlier. On that day, the academy’s main force of magicians, consisting of their lecturers and professors, will all be away. And then, on that day, only the students of ‘that’ class will be coming to the academy. It is truly a wonderful day to strike.”

“…And if for some reason the target is not at the academy on that day?

“Then abort the operation. For our organization, this plan and our worth only

go to such an extent.”

“Haha, I suppose we pledged our allegiance to a difficult organization, haven’t we?”

“That doesn’t matter. That organization gave me everything I wanted”

“By that, you mean that you are on the same boat?”

“Ah.”

“Fufu, then let us pray for the success of our plan. Let us find glory in the wisdom of the heavens—”

Time passed by in the blink of an eye. Glen’s lectures were not like those of supposed ‘genius lecturers’ — His strange character and unique speaking ability had enraptured the hearts of the students. Furthermore, he did not adhere himself to the student’s expectations, nor did he purposely accommodate to the desires of any particular student. All that could be said, was that his lectures were genuine; He fully understood what he was teaching, and was able to simplify and explain it in a clear and concise fashion.

“…Well, That’s about all there is to [Shock · Bolt]. Any questions?”

Glen pressed the chalk against the blackboard, which was filled with neatly organized words, sectional markers, and figures.

There was not a single person with a question. Whilst they felt pressured by Glen’s presence, the real reason was that there was nothing left to ask about.

“If you guys understood what I was talking about today, then you should kinda understand how dangerous it is to cut three-stage chants to one stage. Sure, if you had good magic control and sense it isn’t something that’s hard to do, but you guys absolutely need to understand that, due to the chant, the likelihood of an accident occurring increases. Don’t take this lightly, otherwise, you might die in some deadly accident someday.”

Then, Glen looked at the students with a serious expression that they have never seen before.

“Finally, the most important thing… As I explained, the efficiency of magic

power of the three-stage chant will always win over that of the one-stage chant. So from the perspective of not using magic wastefully, the three-stage chant is clearly the best. That's why I strongly recommend that you guys use the three-stage chant for magic. I'm not saying this cause I'm frustrated that I can't use the one-stage chant ok? For real. Like I said, for real ok?"

So he is frustrated about it…

In that moment, all the students understood this fact.

"Anyway, as of now, you guys are nothing but 'Magic-users' that can simply use magic. If you guys still want to be 'Magicians' someday, then go and take some time to think about what you're really lacking. Well, I don't really recommend doing that. It's kind of boring and a waste of your lifetime, and surely there's something more meaningful you can do with your life… now then —"

Glen took his watch out of his pocket and checked the time.

"Woah, I went past the time huh… My my, can I get my overtime pay if I apply for it? Well, whatever. That's it for today. C-ya."

Glen left the classroom grumbling to himself.

The students absentmindedly saw him off. When the door closed with a bang – as if it was some kind of signal – they all began copying notes from the blackboard. It seemed as though they were possessed by something.

"What was that… I've been had."

Clutching her face in her hands, Sistina sighed deeply.

"To think that that guy could teach…"

"Mhm. I was a bit surprised as well."

Lumia's eyes were wide in amazement.

"It's frustrating… and I don't want to admit it… despite that guy being the worst person I could possibly imagine, he's an amazing magical instructor… though he's the worst person I could possibly imagine."

"Ah, Ahaha, there's no need to say it twice…"

“But… why did that guy suddenly take his classes seriously? I mean, he was acting like that yesterday, so… Hm?”

Sistina who turned to face Lumia, noticed—

“Lumia… what are you so happy about? Your smile is spilling all over the place you know?”

“Fufu, is that so?”

“Yes it is. I’ve never seen you this happy before. Did something happen?”

“Ehehe, nothing happened—”

“Liar. Giving that expression, there’s no way nothing happened.”

“Ehehehe…”

No matter how many times she asked, her close friend would dodge the question with a smile on face. All Sistina could do was tilt her head in thought.

The useless instructor Glen, awakens.

The news shook the entire campus. As the rumor spread like wildfire, students of other classes began to attend Glen’s lectures in their free periods, and all of them, without exception, were amazed at the quality of his lectures.

Till now, the instructors at this academy were judged by their rank as a magician. Their qualifications, their authority, and the support of the students were all based on their rank. However, the seemingly eternal conception of ‘authority as justice’ that presided in this academy was crushed with the passing of a single night. For the instructors, this was like a living nightmare.

“Serika-kun, the man you brought in is amazing!”

The excited voice of the academy’s headmaster, Rick, resounded through the room. It was obvious to anyone that he was in a brilliantly good mood.

“I was worried about his reputation during the first eleven days, but I suppose all’s well that ends well.”

“…Kuh”

Harry groaned in frustration. Ever since Glen had begun to seriously teach, the attendance of his classes dwindled little by little. In other words, there were students that would ditch his classes for Glen's.

"Fufufu… As a matter of fact, Glen is one of my disciples that I have taught from scratch."

Taking advantage of the moment, Serika raised her chest high in pride, and announced.

"What! Serika-kun, you, of all people, have a disciple!? Weren't you against the idea of disciples?"

"He's the only exception. Though in any case, his grades were quite poor."

"Oho~ I would've never thought. However, why did you hide this until now?"

"Hm? Isn't that obvious? If Glen is truly useless as an instructor, then won't I – as his master – be on the receiving end of the shame? That's why I stayed silent about it."

"Like Master, like disciple, you—!"

Harry's attempt at a retort was in vain.

"Don't say that Harry. Even if you praise me like that, you will get nothing out of it."

"Shut up! I wasn't praising you, you stupid idiot of a master!"

"Oh my, from a magical talent standpoint, Glen's situation is truly regrettable. However, he's a hardworking fellow you see? Since he was a kid, I've told him countless times that 'magic isn't suitable for you, go do something else', but he didn't listen to me at all, rather, he told me that he wants to become an amazing magician like myself you see? Even though he's still a third-rate magician, his abilities are at least at the level of an ordinary magician right? That's when I realized you know, that he's a kid who could do it if he wanted to. Ah, yes yes, now I remember. When I first started to teach him magic, he did something like __"

And so, she went on and on.

Serika – whose attitude was generally brazen and audacious – showed an

unbelievably gentle expression as she began to boast about her disciple.

As for Harry; he did not want to hear, nor did he want to know about the top-secret information that was being leaked through the room. His shoulders were visibly trembling, and the veins on his forehead could be seen.

(Damn you… Glen Ryders…-!)

As Harry trembled in frustration, he suddenly remembered the incident that happened a few days ago—

"Oi, Glen Ryders! Oi, are you listening Glen Ryders! Respond to me!"

That day—

Harry – as a senior instructor and professor of the academy – planned to 'have a word' with Glen, who had become infamous throughout the academy for his attitude and activities. Harry shouted coercively towards Glen, who lazily walked down the hallway.

Then, Glen suddenly turned his head to around him, and glanced sideways at Harry for a brief moment. He tilted his head in puzzlement, promptly ignored Harry's presence, and continued walking.

"Hey, oi!? What is that 'Who the heck are you talking to' attitude supposed to mean!? You're Glen Ryders right!? It can't be anyone else but you right!?"

"You're wrong. You have the wrong person."

"As if! No one but Glen Ryders would have a stupid face like you! Also, I was the one who performed your employment interview!"

"Ah, and here I was thinking who you were! So it's you, my senpai instructor, Harem! Hey what's up!"

"It's Harry! Harry! Are you messing with me you little brat!?"

"No no, not at all, erm, Ha— something senpai."

"You bastard, do you not want to remember my name that badly? My name is…"

Though Harry was seething with rage, he continued onto the main topic.

“Listen well, Glen Ryders. I’ve heard that your attitude has been unbecoming of an instructor, yes?”

“……”

“Are you trying to play dumb? You should realize that your current unprecedented position is a result of neither your talent nor your prowess! Rather, it’s the result of what that witch… what Serika Alfornea did for her own self-gratification! Know your place! Even if you have Serika Alfornea—“

“Don’t you get tired of saying her full name each and every time?”

“Shut up! Don’t try to butt in while I’m still talking! Even if you have Serika Alfornea – who has reached the seventh-rank and the domain of gods – backing you, don’t kid yourself by thinking that you can keep up this peremptory farce on forever!”

“Exactly-! Don’t you also think that Serika’s been getting carried away recently!? If she keeps this up, she’ll one hundred percent receive divine punishment some—”

“Why are you treating this like someone else’s problem!? Anyway, despite the contract period being one month, don’t fool yourself into believing that you’ll stay here for the entirety of it! I’ll do everything I can to get you kicked out of this academy! So prepare yourself…huh?”

Before Harry realized it, Glen was bowing towards him. It was a magnificently deep and well-postured bow.

“Thank you very much! I will be in your gracious care! I have super great expectations for you, so give it your best shot! Erm, Ha—…? Ah, Yuri-senpai!”

“Y-, Y-, You bastarddddd—!?”

…

Until now, was I being played around like a fool?

That stupid fool of a man is a better instructor than I am!? I can’t accept that! I won’t accept that!

“And then you see—, that guy, after working so desperately, was finally able to successfully cast that magic you see—, and he was like ‘Serika thank you very much!’ while crying you see—. My—, he was so cute back then wasn’t he—. Anyway, I got a better opinion of him after that. Do you think so too? Hm?”

Without a care for Harry’s seething rage, Serika continued to boast about her disciple.

This pair of master and disciple is nothing but irritating.

Gununu… Damn you, Glen Ryders! I will absolutely drive you out of this academy someday…! Mark my words…!

Harry – his face red with anger – swore that he would one day overthrow Glen…

Sistina and the rest of year two, class two – who were assigned to Glen – quickly became the subject of envy for all the students of the academy. The open seats in the classroom were reduced day by day, and after ten or so days, there were even people standing in the classroom to listen to his lectures.

As Glen’s reputation amongst the students rose, some of the academy’s professors began to reevaluate their teaching ideology of ‘Memorizing as much magic as possible in order to increase rank’. There were even some passionate and young professors that attended Glen’s lectures, hoping to learn his magic theories and teaching style.

However, the person in question failed to realize the attention that was being gathered towards him, and continued to conduct himself in a somewhat unmotivated manner. Today too, he taught his lectures in a way that made it apparent that he thought this was a toilsome.

“…So, magic is divided into two types, ‘general magic’ and ‘original magic’. You guys usually mock general magic as ‘magic that anyone could use’. However, after today’s analysis and breakdown of the magical formulas, I think that you guys should now understand that general magic is far more detailed, precise, and complete when compared to original magic.”

Glen pressed the chalk in his hand against the one-stage magic that was

written on the board.

“That’s only natural. Even an elementary magic like [Shock · Bolt], is the result of the modifications and refinements made by hundreds of magicians, whom are hundreds of times more talented than you guys, over the course of hundreds of years. You guys always say stuff like ‘this isn’t original’ or ‘this is past its time’ to the great formula-sama… Geez, are you guys stupid or what?”

The students whom thought that original magic was the greatest at the beginning of class, were now dropping their shoulders in shame.

“You guys tend to look at a magician’s unique original magic as something holy, but to be honest, creating an original magic is nothing special. Even a third-rate magician like myself had easily made one. Now then, if we talk about the difficulties when it comes to original magic, it would be trying to overcome the difference between a general magic, the perfected fruit of the efforts of hundreds of magicians that are hundreds of times more talented; and original magic, a formula that you have pieced together on your own. Well, at the very least, an original magic must go beyond what general magic can do, otherwise it would be totally meaningless.”

Seeing the depressed moods of the students, Glen showed a sour smile.

“Alright, do your heads hurt? As you saw just now, the general magic that you guys have mocked is actually magic that has been perfected to the point where there is nothing to change for the better. Well usually, original magic is nothing more than a worse replica of general magic you know? I tried playing around with it in the past, but I never ended up with anything useful. In the end I gave up after realizing how much of an idiot I was. Haha… I wasted a lot of time back then didn’t I?”

At this, half the students began to chuckle, and the other half raised an eyebrow. Whilst all of them had to admit that Glen was a good teacher, there were many who felt repulsed by his disrespectful attitude towards magic.

“Well, if you ever reach this stage, then it’s a problem of your magic sense and talent. However, there is still meaning in learning the general magic that your predecessors have crafted. It doesn’t matter whether it’s to improve your own ability to structure formulas or whether it’s to hide your secrets. In the future, if

you plan to create your own original magic, this is all the more important. Well, in either case, I think you guys are wasting your time for something that's only for your self-satisfaction. There are more meaningful ways to live your life you know… Now then…"

Glen took his watch out of his pocket, and checked the time.

"…It's time. Well, that's all for today. Ah-, I'm so done…"

As soon as Glen announced the end of the lecture period, a relaxed atmosphere permeated the classroom.

Glen picked up the eraser, and began to erase the formulas and explanations that were written on the blackboard.

"Ah, wait sensei! Please don't erase it yet. I haven't finished copying it into my notes!"

Sistina raised her hand.

Then, Glen showed a crude smirk. His hand – as if creating clones of itself – moved swiftly across the blackboard. Cries could be heard throughout the classroom.

"FUHAHAHAHAHAHAH—! Half of it is already erased you know!? Serves you right!"

"Are you a kid!? You-!"

Sistina wordlessly slouched her head over the desk.

"Ahaha, I copied it from the board already, so I'll show it to you later today ok? Sisti."

"Thanks… Well, I guess that he's a good lecturer, but there's no changing that twisted personality of his is there?"

Sistina looked towards the blackboard. Glen – as he was erasing the text on the blackboard – appeared to have scratched his nails across it by accident. In pain, he pressed his hands to cover his ears. It was a pitiful sight to behold.

"Is that so? I think sensei is fine this way."

"Lumia… are you serious?"

“Mhm, I think he’s cute when he acts like a child.”

“I’ll never be able to understand your preferences…”

“…Ah, sensei!”

Lumia suddenly stood up from her seat, and ran to Glen as if she was a little pup.

“Uhm, would you like some help moving that?”

One could see that Glen was currently carrying about ten thick books, and was about to leave the classroom.

“Hm? So it was you, Lumia. You’ll help me a bunch by… but these are quite heavy alright? Can you handle this?”

“Yes, I’ll be fine.”

“I see… Then help me carry these. Thanks.”

Glen passed two books to Lumia, and as he did so, he showed an uncharacteristically warm expression towards her. Lumia, who received the books, show an ecstatic smile. Observing the scene, it felt like the two were a pair of close siblings. However, Sistina who saw this scene unfold, seemed to be fairly disinterested.

“P, Please wait up!”

However, despite her reluctant expression, she still walked up to Glen.

“Hm? You are… Erm, Sis…tilinna? Right?”

“It’s Sistina! Sistina! You’re not doing this on purpose are you!?”

“Alright alright alrrright, so what does Sisomething-san need from me?”

“I-, I’ll help you out as well… I can’t just let Lumia help you alone…”

“…Oh? Then here, carry these.”

Glen’s lips curved into a dastardly smirk as he offloaded all the textbooks into Sistina’s hands.

“Kyaa!? Wha, this is really heavy!?”

Sistina staggered and almost fell, but managed to recover her posture.

“My, ahaha, it sure is nice to be hands-free!”

Ignoring Sistina, Glen began to walk off.

“W-, What’s this supposed to mean? Is it just me, or is there a huge difference in how you treat Lumia and I!?”

“Lumia is cute. You are cheeky. Based on that—”

“This stupid instructor… I, I’ll remember this ok—!?”

Despite being on the receiving end of the shouts coming from behind, Glen’s lips curved into a smile.

Afterschool. The students had already left—

Glen – alone on the rooftop of the academy – leaned himself against the metal railing, and looked off into the distance. The streets of Fejiti that were illuminated by the setting sun, and the phantasmal castle that was dyed in its colors hadn’t changed at all from back then. The only one that had changed was himself.

Glen thought back to the day that he had become a temporary instructor at this academy. Needless to say, those who had left a strong impression on him on that day were those two girls that he had become deeply involved with.

The girl that for some reason, had become attached to him like a cute pup – Lumia.

The girl that for some reason, had conflicted with him like a cheeky little kitten – Sistina.

I really don’t get what they’re thinking, to think that they would proactively approach someone like me… And despite all that’s happened, is it alright for me to feel pleasant when I associate with them?

There is also something I want to see. I want to see how they’ll grow up, and what kind of path they’ll take in the future.

Lumia may make new possibilities for a useless thing like magic.

And Sistina, who still carries the passion for magic that I lost a long time ago,

will continue to pursue it without losing her way.

The two of them are young and immature as they are now, but what will they grow up to become in the future? If I said I didn't want to help them… that would be a lie.

"Well, how should I say this…"

I still hate magic. I want throw up at the mere mention of it. It is something that should disappear from this world. This belief of mine probably won't change in the future, right? However, these peaceful days— "Aren't too bad… Huh-"

Glen hadn't noticed that he was smiling.

"Oh, oh, so now you're here to enjoy the view of the sunset. My, that's youth I suppose."

Suddenly, a playful voice came from behind Glen, and he turned his head to glance behind him.

"Since when were you here? Serika."

Serika silently stood there in a ladylike manner. One might call it 'a beautiful lady being illuminated by the sunset'. Her pretty hair – whose colors reminded one of a field of wheat under the setting sun – swayed freely in the gentle wind.

"Since when was I here I wonder? Consider this as a problem from a teacher to a po~or student. Why don't you take a guess?"

"Are you an idiot? Since there were no magical waves, it means the rules of the world hadn't been changed. If that's the case, that means you simply snuck up here."

"Oh, that's correct. Ahaha, unexpectedly, no one seems to be able solve such a simple question. In particular those that think that all the mysterious phenomena of the world can be explained by magic don't seem to have a single clue."

Hearing Glen's prompt answer, Serika showed a satisfied smile.

"So what did you come here for? Aren't you busy preparing for tomorrow's assembly?"

“Oi oi, is it wrong for a mother to want to see her child?”

“What child. We weren’t even related to begin with.”

“But I was the one who took care of you when you were still th~is small. Isn’t that enough justification for me to call myself your mother?”

“Think about the age difference between us you witch. Rather than mother and child, it’s more like grandmother and grandchild.”

Serika appeared to be a lady who was about 20 years old.

However, Glen thoroughly understood that her appearance did not befit her age. After all, Serika’s appearance had not changed since the time Glen had first met her.

Why didn't Serika grow any older? How old is she really? Although Serika never so much as uttered about herself… according to a certain historical record, her age was in the hundreds.

"My-My, even though you were such a cute little boy when you were young. To think that you would become such a sophisticated man…Ah, the passing of time is truly cruel."

"…None of your business."

In a sulky manner, Glen turned his head away from Serika.

"You seem a bit more energetic than before… I'm glad."

"Hah?"

Hearing what Serika unexpectedly muttered, Glen shouted out in surprise.

"Have you not noticed? You've become much livelier recently you know? Your eyes are like a fish that's only been dead for a day."

"…Oi."

"Before, your eyes were more like a fish that's been dead for a month"

Hearing that, Glen sighed and shook his head.

"…Sorry for making you worry ok."

"No it's fine. It was my fault after all."

Serika turned her eyes to the floor. In a soft voice that was uncharacteristic of her usual haughty self, she said:

"Surely, this is what you call being an idiot parent. I used to think of you as my pride. So—"

"That's enough already. How many times have I told you that it's not your fault? That was just me being an idiot and not realizing the truth behind it all."

"But you still loathe magic."

Glen was finally able to understand Serika's intentions.

"…So it was like that. You wanted me to enjoy magic, even if it was only a little bit, so you made me a magical instructor?"

Thinking back, almost all of his happy memories had occurred when he was learning or testing magic with Serika.

“Geez, how old are you now? You’re still unexpectedly childish. Magic is not the only way in which we’re connected you know? Sure, I hate magic now, but that doesn’t mean I hate you.”

“I see. Mhm, you’re right… I’m glad.”

Hearing what Glen said, Serika showed a warm smile. To him, it was a very comforting smile.

“Ah-, damnit, so that’s what it was. Then hm… if I had just said that to you from the start, you wouldn’t have forced me to become a temporary instructor right?

“Stupid you, this and that are different. Just give it up already, your living costs will be earned by you and only you.”

“Ahhhh-, Ahh-, I didn’t hear any~thhing.”

“This useless….”

Serika lowered her shoulders in amusement, and continued:

“Well, fine. In any case, your successful return to society is a great step forward. At this rate, that sickness of yours might even be cured you know.”

“Sickness? Huh, what are you talking about. I’m totally healthy—”

“You think that you don’t have the right to have any deep associations with others, and you don’t want anyone to become close to yourself. In order to achieve that, you purposely get on people’s nerves and to get people angry, or you purposely try to treat them as coldly as possible — That’s the ‘sickness’ I’m talking about”

“…..u-”

As Serika pointed that out, a large bead of sweat trickled from Glen’s forehead down his cheek.

Then, Serika showed a devious smirk, and shrugged her shoulders.

“Hey Glen. Even though you have a past like that, that ‘sickness’ of yours is

quite common in children you know? And to think that at your age, your sickness has gotten even worse… Well, since you're returning to society already, can you just hurry up and get it cured—"

"S-, Shush you're being annoying! It's none of your business ok!?"

Shouted Glen, his face flushed with embarrassment.

"Anyhow, it's not my fault that I'm not interested in anyone you know!? If I'm so used to living with someone as beautiful as yourself, how am I supposed to be interested in other girls!?

"Oho? By that, you mean that you crave for your mother? Oh you big pervert."

Serika showed a sadistic and flirtatious smile and approached Glen from behind. She pressed her body against his back, and locked her arms around his neck.

"Like I would! Also, stop trying to act like my mom! Hey, get off of me! Stop pressing your chest against me, and stop blowing into my ear! It's disgusting!"

"Fufu, what a boring man. Isn't this just skinship between parent and child?"

Seeing Glen's reaction, Serika showed a satisfied smile and let go. Turning to leave, she said:

"Now then, I need to prepare for the magic assembly tomorrow, so it's about time for me to go.

"…Ah. So you need to go to the capital Orlando in the north?"

Glen replied in a discontent manner. Serika's mischievous acts weren't anything new, so it was best to act like nothing had happened.

"Yes. The representatives of the academy are scheduled to use the academy's teleportation circle to move to the capital."

"The distance covered by the fastest horse in three or four days is covered in a single instant huh… My my, magic sure is great."

"Well, work hard on tomorrow's lessons ok?"

"…Huh? Isn't tomorrow the beginning of a five-day break?"

Glen, hearing the unexpected, suddenly became restless.

“I’m only a temporary instructor so I won’t be participating, but won’t all the instructors and professors be at the magic assembly? Isn’t that why there are no classes?”

“Ah, about that, the class you’re in charge of is an exception. What about it? Did no one tell you?”

“Hahhh!?”

“The one that preceded you – Huey – suddenly went missing one day without so much as a word. Due to that, your classes are behind schedule. So in order to catch up, your class will continue during the break period.”

“Wha… I didn’t hear about this at all!”

“Aside from the security personnel, anyone affiliated with the academy will be off-campus ok? Try not to do anything weird while I’m gone ok?”

“Like I would! …No, wait a sec-”

Glen was uncomfortable about something Serika mentioned.

“You said that my predecessor… went missing? Hey wait, what’s that supposed to mean?”

“Even if you ask me that… It’s exactly what it means. The professor that preceded you, Huey Raysen, suddenly went missing one day. As of now, no traces of him have been found. His whereabouts are completely unknown.”

“Oi, this isn’t what you told me before. Didn’t you say that that Huey person resigned for personal reasons…”

“That’s just an explanation we give to the students. Either way, if he had officially resigned, the academy would’ve never been in a situation where the replacement instructor may be deemed ‘unusable’ after one month.”

Glen showed a bitter expression, and wordlessly thought about the situation.

“In any case, this feels a bit suspicious…”

“Well, there have been a lot of disturbances around here recently. If we’re talking about you then there’s nothing to worry about, but try to be cautious while I’m not here.”

“…Ah.”

Whilst the incident regarding the missing person was somewhat offputting, it didn’t really affect Glen directly. There was no doubt about that. However, Glen couldn’t help but feel a bit uneasy about this.

It was then—

“Ah, so you were here! Sensei!”

The door to the rooftop balcony was opened, and a familiar two-person group appeared. One showed a wide smile, and the other showed a sour expression.

“Eh? Professor Alfornea, could it be that we’re disturbing the two of you?”

“No, I was about to leave. What are you here for? Do you need Glen for something?”

“Yes.”

With a flowery smile, Lumia ran towards Glen.

Seemingly in a bad mood, Sistina reluctantly followed.

“Didn’t you guys go home already?”

“Ah, we were in the library copying each other’s notes and reviewing today’s lectures, but there is something that we just had to ask you about… At least Sisti does.”

“Hey, stop!? Didn’t you promise to me that you weren’t going to tell him!? You traitor!”

Her face now flushed red, Sistina rose her voice to protest, but it was already too late.

“Oho? And what is that supposed to mean, Sistichi-kun? Oh my, oh my, could it be that you wanted to ask the extraordinary instructor, the great Glen Ryders-sensei-sama a question? Hm-?”

Glen put up this refreshing display without any hesitation. His downcast gaze and exasperating smile made one want to punch him square in the face.

“This is why I didn’t want to ask you! Also, I’m called Sistina alright!? Can’t you just remember it already!?”

“I can’t help but feel that your name is hard to remember. I think it’ll be fine to leave it as White Cat.”

“Ah, you—!”

Sistina seemed like she was on the verge of tears.

“Sensei, could I borrow some of your time? Actually, about this part, I realized that I didn’t fully understand it when I was reviewing…”

“Ah, sorry about that, Lumia. I also felt that my explanation about this wasn’t quite enough. Well, it should that right? Let me see-”

“L-, Like I said before, what is this difference in treatment between Lumia and I…-!?”

“Lumia is cute. You are cheeky. That is all.”

“Is that supposed some kind of joke—!”

Serika watched the three with a gentle smile. Then, she left the rooftop, feeling reassured.

After forcing herself to lower her head in humiliation to ask for Glen’s help, Sistina did not so much as try to hide her frustration and anger. Together with Lumia, she headed home.

“…Geez, what’s wrong with him!”

Contrary to Sistina’s mood, the streets of Feijiti were calm and tranquil. Yet, in the midst of this quiet evening, she roughly raised her voice, and exerted her frustrations everywhere around her. The pinkish colors of the dusk merged together with the calm atmosphere of the town to create a nice and soothing scene. If anything, she seemed like an idiot for throwing a tantrum in spite of this.

“Lumia, you too, what’s so good about that guy? I can’t help but feel that you’re strangely interested in him!”

“Eh? I mean, Isn’t sensei a really nice person?”

“Yeah, right! He only acts nice to you! O n l y t o y o u-!”

In a fit of irritated rage, Sistina clenched her trembling fists tightly.

“Normally speaking, would anyone show such obvious favoritism! The bottom line is, shouldn’t he look me in the eye or at least show me some decency!? But that guy-!”

Lumia smiled wryly, as if she was saying ‘well well’.

“There is absolutely something wrong about this! Right! Surely, that guy is misunderstanding your kindheartedness, and definitely has some ulterior motive! There is no doubt about it! Yea, this is right! It has to be! Ok, Lumia, when that guy is around, never leave my side ok!? That guy… if he lays his hands on you, I really won’t hold back anymore…-!”

Then—

“Hehe”

Lumia began to laugh. It seemed that there was some deeper meaning to it.

“…What happened? Lumia.”

“Mm, uhm, Sisti, I think it’s weird that you worry about me so much.”

“Isn’t it a given that I should be worried about you? We’re family after all!”

Towards Sistina who seemed rather angry towards what she had said, Lumia uttered:

“Do you still remember about what happened three years ago?”

“Three years ago… that should be when you first came to my house, right? What about it?”

‘Why would she suddenly talk about that?’ Sistina couldn’t understand Lumia’s intentions.

However, Lumia showed a nostalgic smile, and continued:

“Back then, we kept fighting with each other didn’t we?”

“T-, That’s because… you acted so abjectly, and you were always crying and being selfish… Erm, to be honest, I didn’t understand your feelings after you were abandoned by your parents, so I was also wrong to-…”

Sistina scratched her cheek in an uneasy manner.

“Then one day – mistaking me for you – some bad people came and kidnapped me.”

“…Now that you say it, that happened didn’t it?”

“After somehow getting home safely, you quickly gave me a hug.”

“…Mm.”

“For the entire night, you hugged me and cried together with me. You kept saying ‘sorry’ and ‘I’m glad you’re safe’ didn’t you?”

“……-, T, That was…Um….”

Feeling embarrassed by what Lumia said, Sistina face turned the same color as the sunset.”

“Thinking back, that was when you and I started getting along.”

Lumia showed a warm smile towards Sistina.

However, despite hearing it through to the end, Sistina couldn’t understand why Lumia suddenly brought that up.

“…What’s happened all of a sudden?”

“Recently, I keep thinking back to what happened in the past.”

Then, Lumia showed a pained smile towards Sistina.

“…I wonder why?”

Lumia asked Sistina such a question, but there was no way that she would know the answer. As for what had caused Lumia to suddenly think about what happened three years ago, she had no idea either. However, she at least understands that for Lumia, what happened three years ago was an amalgamation of unfortunate incidents, and that they were painful memories for her.

That’s why—

“We’re family ok?”

She spoke her heart.

“Even though I don’t understand why you suddenly began to think of painful

things like what happened three years ago, but remember that I'll always be at your side, Lumia. That's why, uhm…"

Towards Sistina, who embarrassedly said such things—

"…Thank you, Sisti"

Lumia showed a gentle smile like a spring breeze.

In the townscape of Fejiti, which was illuminated by the sunset

Two snuggling shadows could be seen stretching off into the distance—

Chapter 4: The collapse of normal days, the vestiges of the past

The next day—

“WOAH CRAP! Late, I’m gonna be laaaaaaate!!”

A familiar scene unfolded on the street to the academy.

Needless to say, the shouts originated from Glen.

This time around, the hands of his watch had not been wrong. He was genuinely late due to oversleeping.

“Damnit! I forgot that the human alarm clock had gone to the capital yesterday!”

Hoisting a slice of bread in his mouth, Glen desperately dashed out of the mansion.

“More importantly, why do I have to teach classes during a day off!? This is why I didn’t want to work! Long live unemployment!”

In any case, I can’t be late, or I’ll have a slightly annoying person nagging me. For now, I’ll just need to try my best to get to the academy as fast as I can. If it goes well, I’ll barely make it on time.

Starting from Serika’s mansion, Glen dashed along the road leading to the academy, ran through several alleyways, before finally arriving on the main road.

And when Glen arrived at the symbolic crossroads—

He felt something was out of place, and suddenly came to a halt.

“—!?”

It was strange for no one to be here. Although it was still fairly early in the morning, this crossroad would always have a few ordinary citizens passing

through. However, not a single sign of life could be felt. Something was clearly wrong.

"No, this is…"

There's no doubt about it. There's a faint trace of magical power in the surroundings. It's a barrier to keep people away. Though the duration of this kind of barrier is limited, an ordinary citizen with low mental-defense will avoid the center of this crossroad without realizing.

…What is this kind of thing doing here?

My temples are burning, warning me of danger. It's been a year since I last felt something like this hasn't it?

Glen focused his senses, and cautiously looked at his surroundings.

Then—

"…What do you want?"

Though his voice was soft, the tone behind it was anything but that.

"Come out. It's pointless to hide any longer ya know?"

Glen looked at a corner of the crossroads with a piercing gaze.

And then—

"Oh…I've been found haven't I? Even though I heard you were a third rate magician… Aren't your senses a little sharp?"

The air twisted like a mirage, and from it, a man emerged.

The most noticeable characteristic of the short man of unknown age, was his unkempt, curly hair.

"Let me first congratulate you for seeing through my magic. However… why did you look over there? I'm here you know?"

"……Nothing really."

Glen turned around to face the man that had appeared behind him.

"Erm. May I ask who you are?"

"No no, I am not someone whose name is worth remembering."

“Well, if you have no business with me, could you please step aside? I’m kinda in a hurry.”

“Hahaha, it’s fine it’s fine. There’s no need to hurry you know? Please, just relax, and take your time.”

Towards the man’s continued rebuttal, Glen raised an eyebrow?

“Hey… did you not hear me when I said that I was in a hurry?”

“Like I said, everything’s fine. After all, your destination has already been changed.”

“Say what?”

“Yes, your new destination… is the afterlife.”

“—!?”

In the instant, that Glen froze in place, the short man began chanting a spell.

“<Rot · Decay · –”

O-, Oh crap—!?

Feeling the magic power on his skin, Glen entered a cold sweat.

He had allowed them to make the first move. Although Glen hadn’t lowered his guard in the slightest, he hadn’t expected his opponent to act so quickly. At this point, with Glen’s need for a three-stage chant, there was no time for counter-magic.

Not to mention, that spell is—

It was a combination of two fatal spells. Furthermore, the incantation was cut to this extent. The ability to cut incantations whilst combining them at the same time was proof of a first-rate magician.

“—Crumble to dust>”

The short man completed the three-stage incantation.

And the frightening power of the spell was about to be released—

At the main entrance of the academy surrounded by thicket of woodland and

metal fencing stood a strange entourage of two people.

One of them looked like a delinquent from a large city, whilst the other, wearing a dark-colored coat, gave the impression of a gentleman. In contrast to the delinquent who carried nothing in particular, the dark-coated man carried a massive attaché case.

“Will that Kiarel guy be able to kill him off?”

“Of course he will. That man has never failed to eliminate his target before.”

“Kekeke. Well then, that means…”

“At this moment, there are no instructor-level or greater magicians present at this academy.”

“Kahahaha! So that means the cute lil’ chicks of that class are the only ones left right!? Alright, come, come, and let onii-san show you his love!”

<TL Note: A play on words; ‘cute’ 可愛い, and ‘to show affection/love’ 可愛がってあげる, use the same kanji, ‘kawai’ 可愛>

“Let’s just leave Kiarel to his devices. We have our own job to do.”

The mannerisms of the two men were polar opposites of each other. If this were a normal occasion, they would surely draw a lot of gazes. However, for some reason, there was not a single person to be seen today.

“Aight. Brother Reick. As expected it doesn’t look like we can just walk in through the front.”

The delinquent man looked around the main entrance of the academy. Despite how empty the arch-shaped main entrance looked, there was some-sort of invisible barrier that prevented them from entering. He tried knocking on the barrier a few times, but nothing seemed to change. It was a barrier that prevented those not registered with the academy from entering.

“Stop playing around Jhin. Hurry up and try the unsealing spell that man delivered to us.”

“Alright, alright~”

Then—

“Oi, you people, identify yourselves!”

A guard exited the guard post was located right next to the main entrance after seeing the two men.

“There’s a special barrier that’s been casted using the academy’s terrain, so only people related to the school can—”

Then, the delinquent man called Jhin pointed his finger towards the left side of the guards’ chest, and muttered a single phrase.

“*<Ka-Bang>*”

In an instant, the guard’s large frame shook fiercely. It would be last phrase he heard in his unfortunate life.

“Erm, alright, this should be it.”

Jhin did not spare even a glance for the guard, who collapsed like a puppet whose strings were cut. He took out a charm from his pocket, and read the runic chant that was inscribed on it. Soon, a sound like shattering glass rang through the surroundings.

“Ohhh-, it’s just like our research said! As expected!”

Confirming that the invisible barrier had disappeared, Jhin began to frolic around like a child.

“Heh, that man’s work is simply perfect.”

“Well, he did spend so much time after all. Now then, let’s report in.”

The two infiltrated the academy grounds through the main entryway.

Jhin took out half of a gemstone, and put it by his ear.

“Yea yea. Everything here is okay, okay. Feel free to close it anytime.”

After several seconds, the sound of metal erupted from the front gate. The barrier of the academy was reconstructed.

“That man is really scary.”

The man wearing the dark-coat, Reick, showed an icy smile.

“To think that he had completely grasped the official security system of the

empire…”

“Well that’s a shame isn’t it? Hehe, this rumored magical fortress is gonna disappear off the face of the earth you know?”

“Now then, let’s go.”

The two men turned to face the academy.

Directly in front of them was the main building, whose annexes looked like outstretched wings.

“Our target is classroom 2-2 at the second floor of the east section.”

“Yea yea…”

“…He’s slow!”

Sistina gripped her pocket watch tightly.

The current time was 10:55. Today’s lecture was scheduled for 10:30, which means that 25 minutes had passed since the lecture was supposed to begin.

Yet, Glen was nowhere to be found. Simply put, he was late.

“That guy… recently his lectures have been really good, so my opinion of him got a teensy bit better, but this is why—Geez!”

Sistina complained in frustration.

“But this is pretty rare isn’t it? Recently, Glen-sensei has been working hard to not be late.”

Lumia, who was sitting beside her, tilted her head in wonder.

“That guy didn’t mistake today for a rest day did he?”

“It can’t be…Even Glen-sensei won’t make such a mistake…… right?”

Even Lumia, who trusted Glen completely, couldn’t deny the possibility.

“Ah, I should’ve known, a useless person is always useless… Alright, I’ll have a word with him today.”

“Ahaha. Don’t you mean ‘another word’ and not ‘a word’? Sisti.”

“Don’t pry on the details!”

Sistina leaned her cheek against her hand and looked around the room.

Originally, there were a lot of free seats in this classroom. However, now it was fully seated. There were even people standing in the back of the classroom to listen to the lecture.

“That guy… He’s become popular recently hasn’t he?”

“That’s because sensei’s lecture are really easy to understand. The content for bachelor students like us are a given, but he’s even able to convey the master-level content in an easily comprehensible manner. Also, unlike the other instructors, he explains the theories that are otherwise skipped.”

“Hah… Well, it’s true that after listening to that guy’s lecture I’m even able to improve my understanding of the basics… but I don’t think there’s any more to it.”

“Fufu.”

Seeing that, Lumia showed a knowing smile towards Sistina.

“…What? What is it Lumia?”

“Sisti, you’re feeling a bit lonely after Glen-sensei got popular with everyone, right?”

“Wha…What did you say!?”

“I mean, in the beginning, even though the two of you were just arguing, weren’t you the only person who talked to sensei? But now, everyone can easily talk to sensei. So you feel like you’ve gotten distant from him, right?”

“H-, Him talking with more and more girls in none of my business okay!? Lumia, don’t you think you’re misunderstanding something?”

“Hm? I didn’t say that he was talking to girls though.”

“Gu—”

Touché. Knowing that Lumia had gotten the better of her, Sistina showed a sour expression.

Though she didn’t see Glen in that way, it was true that the only one to talk to

Glen in the beginning had been herself. Now that that guy had become the center of everyone's attention, she couldn't help but feel a bit disheartened. It was all the more so when he was talking to another girl. A maiden's heart was truly complicated.

"A-, and what do you think…?"

"Me?"

"Yea. Weren't you interested in Glen-sensei since the beginning? Don't you feel a bit disheartened? By this situation I mean-"

"I feel… happy, I think?"

"…Ha?"

"Now that everyone understands that Glen-sensei is an amazing person… I'm very happy."

It was what Lumia earnestly believed. When Glen became recognized by everyone around him, she was happy to the point where it seemed as though she was Glen herself.

"…I can't help but feel like there's a difference between us… as women."

"…?"

Sistina pressed her hand against her face and sighed. On the other hand, Lumia simply tilted her head in puzzlement.

Then, the classroom door was flung open, and someone began to walk in. It was then—

"Ah, Sensei, what the heck are you thinking!? You're late again you know!? Geez…eh?"

Sistina had prepared to quickly berate Glen, but after seeing who walked in, she immediately stopped.

In place of Glen, there were two people. One was a man that gave off the vibe of a delinquent, and the other was a man dressed in a dark coat.

"Ah, it's here huh—. My, everyone, thank you for your passionate studying! Work hard you young 'uns!"

Suddenly, an unknown duo entered the room and addressed the class.

“Ah, about your teacher. Well, he’s a bit busy with somethin’ right now, so we’re here as his replacement. Nice to meet ya’!”

“Wait… Who exactly are you people?

Sistina, who had a strong sense of justice, stood up from her seat, and fearlessly walked up to confront them.

“This is the Alzano Imperial Magical Academy. Outsiders are not permitted here okay? How did you guys even get in here in the first place?

“Oi oi, if you wanna ask questions, ask them one by one okay? I’m not educated like you guys!”

“…-!”

It seemed like the delinquent man had a wild mood, and couldn’t be reasoned with at all. Sistina went silent, showing a bitter expression.

“First, about us hm… We’re something like terrorists I guess? Basically, we’re a group of sca—ry onii-sans that have a problem with the empress-sama.”

“Ha?”

“Then, about how we got in here… we killed some pitiable guard-san, broke that bothersome barrier, and then came here to trouble you, you see? How’s that? All o-kay with you guys?”

A commotion began to stir through the classroom.

“D-, Don’t joke around! Answer me seriously!”

Sistina shouted at the man, her shoulders trembling in anger.

“But it was really really the truth ya know~”

The delinquent man raised his arms into the air in a funny manner.

“The guards working at this school are all magicians that have been extensively trained in combat! They wouldn’t easily lose to someone of the likes of you. Also, the academy’s barrier is something that the best of the best magicians can’t even hope to break you know!?”

“Ah-, is that true? Well than I guess this super famous magic academy isn’t too big of a deal. Maaan, I’m really disappointed!”

“…If you keep up this attitude of yours, then there are things I can consider doing alright?”

“Eh? What? What is it? What are you planning to do? Tell me tell me.”

“…-! I’m going to knock you unconscious and hand you over to the police! If you don’t want that to happen then hurry up and leave this academy…”

“Kyaa—, we’re going to be captured!? Oh no—oooooo!”

Seeing that the duo had no intention to leave, Sistina steeled her resolve.

“I’ve given you a fair warning okay?”

She refined her internal magic power. Using her breathing techniques and focus, she adjusted her mana biorhythm.

Then, she pointed her finger towards the man— And chanted the black magic [Shock · Bolt].

“*<Oh thunder spirits’—>*”

“<Ka-Bang>”

However the delinquent man’s chanting completely overwhelmed hers.

Sistina saw a flash of light emit from the man’s finger.

And at the same time, the sound of the air being ripped apart and the wall behind her being pierced by something could be heard.

“…Eh?”

“*<Ka-Bang> <Ka-Bang> <Ka-Bang>*”

What followed were more three flashes of light, which grazed Sistina’s neck, hips and shoulders.

“M—”

Unable to move, Sistina’s body dripped with cold sweat.

Frightened, she turned to look at the wall behind her. There were small clean holes the size of coins. The wall had been pierced through so cleanly that one

could see what lay on the other side.

What frightening penetrating power.

Needless to say, Sistina and the rest of the class understood the real form of the magic that the man had chanted.

“No way… Could that be… The spell you used just now was… [Lightning · Pierce]!?”

The black magic [Lightning · Pierce].

It was a military-grade offense magic that would pierce through one’s target with a flash of lightning. Based on appearances, it wasn’t too different from [Shock · Bolt], however, its force, speed, penetrating power, and range wasn’t comparable. The spell [Lightning · Pierce] could pierce through thick reinforced metal with ease. Furthermore, the amount of electrical current in the spell was far greater than [Shock · Bolt]. If it was used on an ordinary person without any magical resistance, they would definitely die from electrocution, regardless of where the spell actually hit. Unlike its simple appearance, it was a spell that carried a dreadful amount of killing power. The spell’s existence on the battlefield had once rendered bows, guns, and even metal useless.

“W-, Why…Such a dangerous spell…”

Sistina’s legs began to shake in fright. Soon, her knees failed to support her, and she fell to the ground.

“N-, Not to mention…The spell was cut to such a short one-stage chant, and it could even be repeatedly fired…”

Although it looked like he was playing around, the technique that the man used required extraordinary skills. Anyone who had experience with magic could understand this.

At that moment, all the students in the room understood that they could not win against the man before them. There was simply too big of a difference in combat power. Even if the entire class worked together as one, they wouldn’t even be able to threaten this man. The difference in power between the two groups as magicians, was despairingly large.

“Could it be… that you guys really are…?”

“I to-ld you that already didn’t I? That we’re terrorists. This academy is already under our control, so remember to act real mature and human okay? Ah, right right, if there’s anyone who plans to resist, step right up alright? I’ll give you a painless death.”

Not a single student even considered it. . After all, [Lightning · Pierce] was a military-grade magic — a magic that was employed by army magicians for use in wars. The only thing that could combat military-grade magic was military-grade magic, and at present, none of the students amongst the class could use it. The professors and lecturers at this school had been forbidden to teach military-grade magic to the students here, since they haven’t even received the qualifications of a bachelor. It was deemed that – for the students who hadn’t fully matured as magicians – the lethality of military-grade magic was simply too high.

Thus, the offensive spells that the bachelor students learned were limited to [Shock · Bolt], which knocks its target unconscious, [Flash · Light], which blinds the target, and [Gale · Blow] which blows the target away with a gust of wind. They were all spells that were considered non-lethal.

Using elementary-grade magic to fight against an opponent who could cast [Lightning · Pierce] with a one-stage chant, was like fighting with a water gun against an opponent armed with a handgun. As for whether or not Sistina would stay alive… it could very well be decided on a whim of the delinquent man.

Then, though it was late, the classroom entered a state of panic.

“U-, UWaahahhh!?”

“KYAAAAAA!?”

Soon after the room fell into a state of chaos—

“Shut up, you brats are being annoying. Do you want me to kill you?”

The man pointed his finger towards the students and threatened them. In an instant, the classroom returned to its original silence. Feeling the genuine murderous intent of someone that had killed a countless number of people, the students went mute and shivered in fear.

“Oh-, good kids, good kids. As expected, a classroom has to be quiet—”

“Now then, I have a question for you good kids. Will you hear me out?”

The students off the class all lowered their heads in fear.

“Well in here you know, is there a girl named Lumia-chan? If you are could you raise your hand please—? And if anyone knows could you please tell me—?”

Murmurs quickly spread through the classroom.

“…Lumia?”

“…W-, Why Lumia…?”

The students of the classroom conversed each other with desperately strained voices.

‘Why did they name Lumia specifically?’ The class was troubled by this.

And when the name had been called, some students unconsciously turned their gaze towards one side.

“Ah-, I see. So Lumia-chan is on this side of the class right—? Hmpf, which one of you is it, I wonder?”

Having noticed this, the delinquent man had walked to the section that Lumia sat in.

“Are you Lumia-chan?”

The man leaned his head forwards towards Rin, who was seated two seats behind Lumia.

“N….No….”

“Then, do you know who Lumia is?”

“I-, I don’t…”

“Hm? …Really? I really don’t like liars you know…?”

Rin seemed like a frog being swallowed by a snake. Her body trembled in fear, and teardrops trickled down from her eyes.

At this moment, Sistina signaled to Lumia through her gaze. If she didn’t do so, there was no telling when Lumia – who gripped her fists tightly in resolve –

would stand up and admit her identity.

(You can't Lumia. You're going to be killed.)

(But…-!)

(It's alright, just don't move!)

After this short conversation through eye and head movements, Sistina pressed her hands against her trembling knees, and stood up.

"Y-, You people, what do you plan to do with this girl named Lumia?"

"Hm?"

Seeing that the girl had once again confronted him, the delinquent man showed an amused expression.

"Do you know Lumia-chan? Or are you Lumia-chan?"

"Answer my question! What the heck are you guys plan—!?"

"Shut up, you little brat."

Though he had displayed a relaxed attitude until now, his expression suddenly turned freezing cold, as if he was a viper.

"Hm, let's start with you then—"

Without a since trace of doubt, the man pointed his finger towards Sistina's head—

"I am Lumia."

In that moment, Lumia stood up from her seat.

The man paused.

"Eh?"

Losing interest in Sistina, the man turned away, and walked in front of Lumia.

"…Ah."

Realizing that she had survived by the skin of her teeth, Sistina once again fell to the floor.

"Ah, so you are Lumia-chan… Well, actually I already knew."

“Eh?”

“I mean, investigating before we do something is just common sense right? That’s why I recognized you immediately you see!”

“Then, why didn’t you just start with me….”

“Well, if you decided not to fess up immediately, I decided that I would play a game where I would ‘Ka-Bang’ unrelated people one-by-one, until Lumia-chan admits her identity, or until someone else tells me.”

Lumia had nothing to say in response. This man had clearly gone mad.

“Ah, but don’t worry. I’m not going to do that anymore. “Since Lumia-chan revealed herself on her own, I won’t slaughter them okay? To sell out your friends in order to save yourself, or to reveal yourself in order to save your friends…. Oh, that indecisiveness is really great ya know! That’s why what you did was nice, Lumia-chan. Fine Play!”

“You fiend…-!”

Angered by the applauding man, Lumia’s expression twisted into a never before seen state.

“Playtime’s over, Jhin.”

The man in the dark coat, who had stayed silent until now, opened his mouth to speak.

“I will bring this girl over to that man. You continue with phase 2 of the operation. I’ll leave the people in this classroom to you.”

“Ah—Geez, this is really troublesome. Hey brother Reick, do I really have to use [Spell · Seal] on all of them? I think it’ll be fine either way, since they’re all small fry. Even if they decide to all attack at once, they’re not going to even touch me you know? Rather, wouldn’t you say that they’re already been totally pacified?”

Jhin looked around the classroom.

All the students avoided meeting his gaze.

“This is the plan we’ve decided on. Don’t mess around.”

“Alright alright.”

The delinquent man turned his head in annoyance.

“Would you like to follow me? Lady Lumia.”

Reick attended to Lumia in an arrogant fashion.

“It’s not like I have a choice right?”

With unwavering resolve, Lumia faced the man head on.

“It’s good that you understand.”

“…Could I have a word with her?”

Lumia turned her eyes towards Sistina, who continued to tremble on the floor.

“Fine. However, don’t try anything funny.”

Reick did not show even the faintest hint of negligence. Lumia, feeling the full pressure of his sharp gaze, kneeled down next to Sistina, and met her gaze.

“…I’ll be going now, Sisti.”

—Don’t, Lumia.

None of Sistina’s cries could be vocalized. There was only the faint movement of her lips.

Even so, Lumia seemed to understand what she wanted to say.

“I’ll be fine. Also, sensei will… Glen-sensei will definitely save everyone.”

She couldn’t understand why Lumia declared such a thing.

—Sensei will?

Nor could she understand why she had mentioned Glen.

However, there was not a single trace of doubt in Lumia’s expression.

“That’s why…”

Lumia, as if she was trying to comfort Sistina, raised her hands towards Sistina’s face… It was then—

“…Don’t touch her.”

Accompanied by an intense murderous intent, Reick lowered his sword towards Lumia’s neck. There was no telling where the sword had come from.

Lumia's hands abruptly stopped in front of Sistina's face. Witnessing the situation unfold, Sistina released an uncontrolled yelp.

"…Why must I?"

Despite the sword hovering over her neck, Lumia replied in a calm and fearless fashion.

"That doesn't matter. Just don't touch anybody, especially the magicians. Otherwise I'll cut your hands off immediately."

"…At this point, I won't try to resist."

Lumia bitterly pulled her hands away. A sense of reproach could be felt in her voice.

Without replying, Reick nodded once, as if signaling, 'I've already let you talk, so come with me now'.

Knowing that it was no use to delay the inevitable, Lumia stood up. Then, Reick said something that shook her to the core.

"Anyway, it seems that you people have some sort of expectation for the person named Glen Ryders… I suggest you give up on that sort of pointless hope."

"Hey, brother Reick. Who is this Glen-sensei person?"

Hearing Reick's declaration, Jhin butted in.

"It's the name of the temporary instructor who is in charge of this class. You should at least remember that much."

"Ah— Glen huh? It was that small fry named Glen huh, okay okay, I remember now. Kekeke, Glen-sensei really is unlucky isn't he?"

Hearing that, Lumia remembered what Jhin said about him 'being busy with something'.

"You people… What did you do to Glen-sensei?"

"Ah-, about that Glen-sensei, he was killed off by one of our guys you know?"

"Wha—"

“Our guy uses a crazy magic called Alchemy-Mod [Piercing Acid Poison] you see. Even though acid and poison are completely lethal elements on their own, that perverted guy decided to combine them out of some crazy interest. That guy is really horrifying when he deals with his prey you know? Even I couldn’t help but feel a bit grossed out. Well, the people of that town back there should’ve discovered some unidentifiable and messed up corpse about now, and there’s gonna be this hu-ge fuss about it.”

“You’re kidding… S-, Sensei…”

“No way…”

Glen was dead. Leaving aside Sistina whose heart was already in shambles, even Lumia – who had put up a strong front the entire time – turned pale in despair.

“Now then, come with me.”

Lumia raised her head to face the man that urged her to follow.

The prior despair was nowhere to be seen. It was an expression that firmly believed that Glen was safe.

“…What a tough lady.”

With a hint of admiration in his voice, Reick left the classroom.

Lumia took a deep breath, and followed behind with a firm resolve.

A crowd of people were gathered at the crossroads leading to the academy.

They stood a fair distance away as they murmured to one another about what was before them.

“That’s… terrible. Has the police not arrived yet?”

“Oi, what should we do? Is that guy still alive?”

“Well… I can’t really tell… but if he’s really alive, it might be more painless for him to just die here and now…”

“Mm… h-, how horrendous…”

“I can’t… This is terrible… It’s just far too terrible… Ugh…I can’t look any longer…-!”

“Damned…devils…This must be the work of some devil…-!”

At the center of the crowd of people—

—Was someone who had been beaten to the point where his body was full of lumps. Then, at some point, he had been stripped naked and tied in a in a turtle shell bondage. The sight was accompanied with embarrassing drawings all across his body that made the evil intentions of the culprit clear. Not only that, a fresh flower had been stabbed into his behind, stuck to his crotch was a postcard that wrote ‘super small’. It was an unconscious, short man.

“Tch—what is happening!? Just what the hell are they planning to do! Goddamnit!”

At the main entrance of the academy—

After confirming that the guard that lay on the floor was no longer breathing, Glen banged his fists against the ground.

“Even though I’m supposed to be an academy personnel, this barrier is blocking me off… The specifications of the barrier were changed. Just what kind of idiot would do something so damn annoying!?”

Should this be considered lucky or unlucky? The culprit’s barrier which led people away had taken effect, so there was not a single person in the vicinity of the academy. Glen chose to calm down and reevaluate the situation.

“Well… the identity of the people behind all this is clear. It’s the Wisdom of the Heavens Research Society… that good-for-nothing group of idiots.”

It was something that Glen had learned after he overturned that short man’s ambush, and stripped him down to shame him. Engraved on his short-sword was the insignia of a snake, and the same detestable insignia had been tattooed on the man’s arm.

The Wisdom of the Heavens Research Society. One of the oldest organizations that existed in the Alzano Empire. For the sake of investigating magic, any

sacrifice would be forgiven. No, rather, it was necessary. ‘The most advanced human beings – the magicians of our organization – should be the ones to guide the world on its course, and anyone who is not a magician of our great organization is nothing but blind, foolish, ‘livestock’ — they were a group of fiendish magicians that carried out this rotten modus operandi. In order to bring their outlandish beliefs to fruition, they waged many conflicts against the imperial government, in which bloodshed was washed away with more bloodshed. They were the worst terrorist organization, and subsequently, the darkest face of the magical world.

After realizing that the man he had knocked out was part of that organization, he cast the white magic [Sleep · Sound] to put him to deep sleep, the black magic [Magic · Rope] to restrain his hand and feet, and the black magic [Spell · Seal] to render him unable to use magic. Overall, the amount of restraint he had used was overkill. No matter how irredeemably evil his opponent was, he couldn’t bring himself to kill them. That’s why he had decided to kill him on a societal level. It was definitely not something he did because he got carried away.

Anyhow, due to Glen’s efforts, the man was powerless for the time being.

When the police see the insignia on his arm, they’ll immediately hand him over to the government, who will then imprison him before transport. There shouldn’t be any problems.

“Then, I got a bad feeling about everything and came to school, and then this happened.”

The guard had been killed, and the academy had been completely sealed off. Seeing that the one that had attacked him belonged to the Wisdom of the Heavens Research Society, it was evident that this was no mere coincidence.

Basically, the people from the organization had specifically chosen to attack the academy today, knowing that all the lecturer-level or above magicians would not be present.

There were several places in the academy that were overseen by guardian golems. However, given that the academy’s security system had fallen under the enemy’s control, the golems won’t be able to properly serve their function.

“But… what is their goal? For what reason did they decide to attack this

academy?”

Is it the magical texts that were kept in the basement of the library? Is it the magic tools in the sealed storehouse of the museum? Sure, those things are extremely valuable, but is it something that warrant an organization like the Wisdom of the Heavens Research Society to come?

“Damnit… Even though those guys are a group of idiots, they’re not something that the town’s policemen can deal with… the only ones with a real fighting chance would be the Imperial Court Magicians. So hurry up and pick up Serika!”

Glen pressed half of a gemstone next to his ear, and infused magic power into it a countless number of times. It was a communication magic tool that he could use to contact Serika, however, Serika wasn’t responding at all.

“What the heck is she doing!? Could it be that she overslept!? Oversleeping is the worst thing you can do as a proper member of society you know!? As someone with responsibility, how could you be this unaware of yourself, you idiot!”

Glen roughly shoved the gemstone into his pocket.

“Now then… what should I do.”

Glen retrieved a charm from his knapsack. It was something that he had found on the short man as he was stripping him, and had taken with him. By the way, this charm was the reason that Glen rushed to academy immediately after dealing with the man.

“I don’t want to say this, but this is probably used to get through the sealed barrier.”

However, based on the formula inscribed on it, it’s a consumable magic tool, which means it can only be used once. Once I enter the academy, I won’t be able to leave until I hunt down the culprit.

So if I use this, I’ll be sealed inside the academy on my own—

“No… It’s too dangerous.”

Not only that, I don’t know anything about the enemy force. If we’re talking about the magicians from the Wisdom of the Heavens Research Society, then

they should be absolute monsters who specialize in combat magic, and who can each take on thousands of people. Going up against them without a plan is the same as committing suicide.

Then I should wait until the Imperial Court Magicians arrive.

"…I don't really have any other choice do I?"

In the first place; If I use this, then the Imperial Court Magicians are going to waste a lot of time trying to get in. No, in the worst case scenario they won't be able to dispel the barrier. After all, the one who invented this barrier is a first-rate magician whose power is at the level of a god.

"However… how long will the Imperial Court Magicians need to get here?"

If I rushed to the police station now, I'll probably have to convince some lazy officer who won't believe me for some reason. Then, they'll have to do the documentation for contacting the army and the ministry of magic — No matter how many times I think about it, it'll take too long.

There's no guarantee that the enemies inside won't harm the students during that time. Normally speaking, the students would have value as hostages, but common sense doesn't apply to a group like the Wisdoms of the Heavens Research Society. It won't be unreasonable either to say that they took over the academy to use the students as sacrifices for some ritual. Although the students are just novices, if a couple dozen of them – who each have plenty of magic power – were sacrificed, then they'd probably be able to summon a pretty powerful devil. They might even be able to refine high-class Orihalcon. That depraved group of fiendish magicians aren't beyond doing that.

"Damn… Just what the heck are they planning? Should I have used mind-reading magic before knocking that idiot out…? Well, I didn't have the time for that, and it's not like my mind-reading technique would have an effect of a magician of that level anyway."

Anyhow, without knowing the enemy's objective, there was no way for Glen to form a plan of action.

"I can't do this. As expected, I can't make any rash moves on my own. I should go to the police office and contact—"

Just as Glen turned to leave.

A beam of light cut through the air.

“—!?”

It seemed that the identity of the beam of light that had pierced through the walls was—

“Is that…[Lightning · Pierce]!?”

It was not a spell that could have been casted by the students, so it had undoubtedly been casted by the enemy. There was no telling what kind of person had used such a frightening spell inside the bounds of the academy.

After a short time, three more beams of [Lightning · Pierce] shot through the air.

Had it been pointed at a crowded area, then dozens of people would die.

“……”

Glen stopped in his tracks. His heartbeat suddenly rose to an intense pace.

‘Are the students alright?’, ‘Did anyone die just now?’ Glen won’t stop sweating.

It wasn’t like he had an especially deep connection with the students. The only reason he had associated with them in the first place was because of his job as a lecturer. Although he didn’t really understand why the students have tried to strike up a conversation with him as often as they could recently, but that’s all there was to it. He didn’t even know the favorite food of a single one of them. It was like they were strangers.

However, he couldn’t help but feel extremely anxious.

The strangest thing was that the faces of the two young girls repeatedly flashed through his mind. It was the annoying group of two he had become involved with since he had become a temporary instructor.

What if the spell just now had been pointed at one of them?

What if they became like the pitiful guard who lay dead beside him? Their limbs would be like those of broken puppets, and their bodies would be thrown aside.

Standing before the two corpses, what would he think?

“Hmpf… they’re not related. I should go contact the higher ups, that’s the best way to do this.”

As though he was cutting off his feelings, Glen turned his back against the academy, and ran.

My destination is the police station in town. There shouldn’t be any reason for me to hesitate.

“What’s your group’s goal? What use do you have for someone like me?”

Asked Lumia. A genuine anger could be felt in her voice, as she trailed behind Reick.

“Why… me?”

“Shouldn’t you of all people know the answer to that? Lumia… Or should I say, Princess Alumiana.”

“—!”

Hearing what she had been called, Lumia gasped for air. However, she regained her composure after a brief moment.

“I don’t know where you learned about my lineage from, but you should understand that I no longer have any value as a princess.”

“Of course I know. In the first place, you are an existence that shouldn’t be alive. However, with due thanks to the mercy of the current empress Alisha, you are still present here and now.”

Reick turned his head and stared coldly towards Lumia.

“You have value because you are a person who isn’t supposed to exist, yet continues to exist.”

“…-!?”

“Even a taboo existence like yours, which should have been discarded a long time ago, has value when given the chance. If certain people are used at the right time, then it is possible to shake the very foundation of the royalty and

imperial governance that is present currently. Furthermore… the generals of my organization are very interested in that special trait of yours. Do rest reassured. Since you are important, they're unlikely to try anything dangerous. At the very worst, you are a target. Consider yourself lucky."

"How could—"

An unbearable chill came across Lumia, and she reflexively held her shoulders.

In the face of this man, whose morals defied that of a human being's, she instinctively felt disgusted.

"I understand that your objective is me. If that's the case, then no one else is related to this… Sistina…and everyone, please release them!"

"You truly are an admirable lady. Despite hearing what I said, you still worry for others. Perhaps it's something that runs in the bloodline?"

In a somewhat moved manner, Reick replied to Lumia.

"However, though it is regrettable, it is something that cannot be negotiated. Although they are mere hatchlings, we finally managed to get our hands on a large amount of young magicians of great vitality. I have a few companions who would like to use them as materials for their experiments."

"How… How could you…. Do you people still consider yourselves human!?"

"Human? How idiotic can you be. We are magicians."

As if to signal the end of the conversation, Reick didn't say anything more.

"Sensei… Glen-sensei…"

Lumia pressed her hands against her chest, and muttered Glen's name.

"Come on, over here. Hurry it up~"

"Kyaa-!?"

Sistina was crudely thrown onto the icy, hard floor.

"W-, What do you want-!?"

Sistina's hands were placed behind her back, and restrained by the black magic

[Magic · Rope]. As a result, she was unable to stand up.

Lying on the floor, Sistina turned her head to look up towards the delinquent man – Jhin. Jhin looked at Sistina – who squirmed on the floor like an earthworm – with a lecherous and excited gaze.

Once the dark-coated man – Reick, left the room with Lumia, Jhin restrained remaining people in the class with [Magic · Rope], and casted the magic [Spell · Seal] on each of them, which sealed the activation of magic, thus, completely robbing them of their ability to resist.

Once he had completed this task, Jhin suddenly seemed to have an idea, and dragged Sistina out of the classroom. After that, he cast locking magic of the entire classroom to trap the students inside.

Finally, in a threatening manner, he brought the defenseless Sistina here.

It was the magic experimentation room. It appeared that there was a magic formation experiment the day before, and a pentagram had been written on the floor using chicken blood. Sistina lay at the very center of the pentagram, as if she was a sacrifice to summon a demon.

“Bringing me all the way here… What are you planning to do with me!?”

As if to suppress her inner anxiety and fright, Sistina lashed out at Jhin.

“Hm? Isn’t that obvious? Since there’s nothing to do, and since there’s free time to kill, I decided that I would take you for a go.”

“Wh—”

“I managed to find a fine gem after all this trouble, so wouldn’t it be a waste to not try it while I still have some free time? Kukuku…”

Jhin responded as if he was listing out his plans for lunchtime. Hearing that response, Sistina was left at a loss for words. Although the things he said were vulgar and crude, she wasn’t innocent enough to not know what he meant. A cold, frightful shiver found its way up her back.

“Y-, You… What are you…”

“My—, I actually kinda like immature brats like you. I’m like a lolicon I guess? Kya~haha, I’m gonna get arrested aren’t I—”

Jhin heartily laughed without a care for Sistina, who turned pale in fright.

“Hmpf, but do I really count as a lolicon if I have a craving for you? I mean, aren’t you already of marriageable age? What do you think?”

“Stop messing around! “I-, I’m the lady of the Phebell house you know!? If you dare lay your hands on me… my father won’t forgive you!”

“Wahhh—, I’m so sca—red. But, that doesn’t really matter. By the way, what is the Phebell house? Are they really great or something?”

“Ky—”

Without a care for what the name Phebell was supposed to mean, Jhin pinned Sistina to the floor.

Her body was sealed. Her magic was sealed. No matter how frustrated she was, she couldn’t put up any resistance.

It was as if she was actually a tribute to summon a devil.

“…Do what you want.”

Though the tone was angry, her voice was soft.

“Oh?”

“If you want to treat me as a tool to vent your frustration, then do what you want, but remember this. One day… I will absolutely kill you with my own two hands. Even though I can’t do it now… but I will chase go to the ends of the world if that’s what it takes to kill you. I will clear this humiliation… in the name of Phebell.”

“……”

Faced with Sistina’s gaze that was sharp as the reaper’s scythe, Jhin – as if he was stared down – suddenly quieted down.

“GYaHaHAHAHAHAHAhahaHA—!”

And suddenly, he exploded into hysterical laughter.

“Wh-, What, is there anything strange!?”

“Hy—aHAhaha! No, you see—”

Jhin rubbed away his tears, and said:

“Actually, I think it would be boring to try to make fun of someone like Lumia-chan.”

“Huh?”

Sistina felt uneasy towards the suddenly change of topic.

“Lumia-chan looks like a weak girl at first glance, but she’s the type of person who can steel her resolve at any moment. No matter how much suffering, pain, or torment people like her go through, their spirits will never break. At least, not until they kick the bucket first. I can understand that much about her.”

Why do you understand that?

If she asked, she might get a bone-chilling response, so she decided against it.

“But, you are different.”

“What did you say…!?”

“You look like a strong person at first glance… but you are actually hella fragile. All you are is a little kid who desperately tries to hide her weakness behind a mask. Simple girls like you are my favorite ones to break, I mean, if a delicious bottle of wine can’t be opened, then all it does is make people feel bad right?”

“—Ku-!”

Sistina’s blood rose to her face at Jhin humiliating words.

“You think that I will submit to you…?”

“Ah, you will, and it’ll probably be easier than I thought.”

“Stop screwing around! I am the prideful Phebell’s—”

“Alright alright, then how long will you be able to keep up I wonder—?”

Jhin – without a single moment of hesitation – ripped the top of Sistina’s uniform apart, revealing the white underwear and skin underneath.

“…eh? …ah”

A hoarse sound escaped from Sistina’s throat. The feeling of her skin being exposed to the chilly air gave her a vivid glimpse of the incoming development.

Little by little, the fatal combination of fear and hatred welled up inside her heart.

“……u, a”

“Hyu—! Your chest is a bit modest but isn’t you skin really pretty! Oh my, it’s standing up…Hm? What’s wrong? Why did you go quiet all of a sudden? That’s no fun.”

Like I would lose to someone like him. Like I would submit to someone like him! I am the prideful lady of the house Phebell. As a magician, isn’t my body is nothing but an expendable tool?

Trembling on the floor, Sistina desperately tried to convince herself.

However, what came out of her mouth was the complete opposite of her thoughts and reasoning.

“…Ah, Uhm…”

“Hm? What?”

“…Please……Stop……”

The moment she uttered such, was the moment where there was truly nothing that she could do. Her hidden dream of giving her first time to the person she truly loved would thus come to an unreasonable end. Her body trembled uncontrollably as tears trickled from her eyes.

“Ah, uhm… Please… Only this… Just don’t do this… Forgive me…”

“GyAHAHhaHAHA—! You broke down a bit too quickly, just like I said! HyAHAhahahaHA-!”

After suppressing his maniacal laughs, Jhin looked down at Sistina with a cold gaze.

“Sorry but no can do… Since I gotten this far already, how could I stop now?”

“…Stop…. Stop… Father… Mother… Help… Somebody help….”

“Ukeke, you’re really the best! Now then, I guess it’s time for me to dig in!” (Itadakimasu)

“N…Noooooooooooo—!”

Sistina desperately moved her body as Jhin’s hand rapidly approached her skin. Then—

KaClang—

The door opened in an untimely fashion.

“Huh?”

“…Eh?”

In the doorway stood a man.

It was Glen.

“Uhh-huh?”

Seeing the two bodies stacked on top of each other, Glen awkwardly shook his head.

“Sorry. I’m interrupting something important aren’t I? Well then, please take your time…”

Saying that, he slowly closed the door—

“Don’t just close the door and leave! Help me out—!”

Hearing Sistina’s shout, Glen reluctantly opened the door and walked inside.

“Ah—, as I thought, it was like that huh? You know, that kind of sickening development? And here I thought you consented with each other, and were about to advance into a ‘Damnit I don’t want to see this just explode or something’ kind of development…”

“As if—!”

On the other hand, Jhin – who had been surprised at Glen’s entrance – quickly retreated from Sistina, and turned to face Glen.

“Who the hell are you-!?”

“I’m kinda an instructor of this academy. Also, let me warn you as a kinda-sensei. What you’re doing is kinda a crime you know? No matter how popular you are, this is kinda…”

Glen’s way of talking was somewhat sloppy. It was a manner that made him seem as if he was talking to a delinquent student.

—*Shoot*

Sistina remembered. She had called out to Glen for help in that moment of desperation, but his opponent – the man named Jhin – was actually an extremely powerful magician. Though Glen was a competent instructor, his power as a magician was lacking.

“Shut up-! Where the hell did you crawl out from you shit-!?

“Oi, don’t treat people like cockroaches. It’s disrespectful to cockroaches you know!?”

“No one even said that you know!? More importantly, just how deep does your self-deprecation go!?”

If Glen and Jhin fight with magic… then Glen will die for sure. Since Glen can only use three-stage chants, there’s no way for him to fight against Jhin’s super-high speed one-stage chant.

“D-, Don’t…! Sensei, run!”

“First you tell me to help, now you tell me to run. What do you want?”

“Just hurry up and go! You’re not this guy’s match!”

“You’re too late-!”

Jhin, who had recovered from the shock, pointed his finger at Glen.

Glen’s hand hurriedly moved to follow — but it was already too late.

“<Ka-Bang>-!”

Jhin’s incantation was completed in an instant. The bolt of lightning that protruded from his finger mercilessly—

“…Huh?”

The black magic [Lightning · Pierce] didn’t activate.

The bolt of lightning that should have appeared in accordance to the completed chant was nowhere to be seen.

“Ku…*<Ka-Bang>*-!”

Jhin chanted the spell again, but the result was no different.

“Wh… What’s happening… hm?”

It was then that Jhin noticed what Glen carried in his hand.

“The fool… arcana tarot card?”

Number 0 of the 22 great arcana cards. The fool.

“You bastard… what the heck is that?”

“It’s my special magic tool.”

Glen showed the image on the card to Jhin, and said:

“By reading the magical formation created by modifying the image of the card, I can activate a certain magic. That is —- With me as the center, I can completely seal the activation of magic within a certain area.”

“Wha…”

“Unfortunate isn’t it? Regardless of how fast you can chant a spell, none of it matters anymore.”

“Sealing the activation of magic… from a distance?”

It was true that there was a spell that could seal the activation of magic. It was the black magic [Spell · Seal]. However, that spell required a charm to be activated. Furthermore, the incantation for the magic would have to be written directly on the target, and had to be directly granted a magical effect. The spell would only function with this specific procedure. That’s why it wasn’t something that could be used during a battle.

On the contrary, all Glen needed to do was glance at a sheet of paper to perfectly seal the activation of magic within the area.

“D-, Don’t fuck with me. The hell is that!? I’ve never heard of this kind of bullshit magic before!”

“Of course you haven’t, cause this is my original magic.”

“Original magic!? You bastard… Are you telling me that you’ve already reached this level!?”

Sistina, who had seen the entire situation unfold, shuddered uncontrollably. She couldn’t help but be struck with wonder.

If one could seal the activation of magic from a distance in a battle between

magicians, then it was an invincible power. It was a completely one-sided game. Even if Glen could only use the three-stage chant, his win rate would still be one-hundred percent. No, if he fought with this original magic, then there wouldn't even be a need to use the inefficient one-stage chant.

"Gu…"

Jhin began to sweat. He realized that he had been trapped inside Glen's technique.

But—

"But well, I actually can't use magic either."

"Huh?"

Sistina and Jhin widened their eyes in surprise.

A mysterious solemnity enveloped the surrounding space.

"Well, I mean, I'm in the area of effect as well aren't I? Since the magic centers around me."

"W-, Wh—What's the meaning of all this then!?"

Sistina could no longer hold back her words.

"GyAHAHAHAHa—!? Are you stu—pid!? Sealing your own magic as a magician, how are you gonna fight then!?"

"Huh? I mean… even if you don't have magic, you still have your fists right?"

Glen relaxed his neck, and said something that was unbecoming of a magician.

"Huh? Fists?"

"Yeah. Fists."

Suddenly, Glen leaped forward with an explosive kick.

Covering the distance between them in an instant, Glen jabbed Jhin's face is a razor-like movement with his left hand, which was immediately followed by a straight from his right.

"Guwaaa-!?"

The lightning-fast one-two strike sent Jhin flying towards the wall with a thud.

“Eh? No way… What—, was that movement…”

I completely missed it. Sistina looked dumbfoundedly at Glen.

Glen slanted his body, slightly bent his back, and rotated the back of his hands towards the direction of his opponent — A stance that was akin to ancient martial arts. With light steps, he cautiously stared down Jhin.

“Y-, You shit—!”

Getting up on his feet, Jhin furiously charged towards Glen.

However, Glen – as if trying to cover Jhin fist from above – initiated his counterattack.

His punch came like a loosened spring, and with a force of a raging wave –

“Gah—!? Puh!?”

At the instant Glen’s fist once again connected with Jhin’s face, Glen deftly shifted his body weight and kneed Jhin’s flank. Then he grabbed Jhin’s shoulder and chest and performed a sweeping kick at his feet, followed by a shoulder throw to send him flying.

“GyAAAAAAAAA-!?”

Jhin cried out as he slammed against the wall again.

“M-hm, I’ve gotten rusty haven’t I? Well I haven’t done this in a while.”

Glen murmured as he cracked his knuckles.

“Y-, You bastard…”

Jhin – his nose now bleeding – rose unsteadily to his feet.

“What’s this? Are you surprised? Actually, a while back, I learned a bit of martial arts from a nearby dojo…”

“Don’t screw with me! Although the arrangements are a bit strange, wasn’t that the imperial army style martial arts? Not the mention that it’s at a fairly high-level… You shit, just who the hell are you really?”

“Glen Ryders. A temporary instructor.”

Jhin opened his eyes wide in surprise, as though he was seeing a ghost.

“Glen, you say…. you’re him!? Could it be that Kiarel actually lost!? You’re kidding…-!? How could a magician of his level…-!?”

Wait, it’s not impossible. Sealing the activation of all magic within an area… It’s something that was downright stupid for any ordinary magician, but… His abnormally high level of martial arts was most likely prepared under the pretense that he would fight using this sealing magic. Before this man, the more talented the magician, the more powerless they become.

“Damnit! Stop it already, stop fucking with me-! Even though you’re a magician, you’re settling this with a fistfight!? You shit, do you have no pride as a magician!?”

“Do you dislike being beaten by something other than magic that badly? Geez, I don’t have a choice I guess. Well then, why don’t I show you the legendary magic called [The Iron Fist of Magic – Magical☆Punch]? Now keep your eyes peeled.”

“Huh?”

Glen’s fist rapidly approached Jhin, who was frozen in shock.

“The Iron Fist of Magic—”

“U-, Ohhhh-!?”

In response to Glen’s punch, Jhin moved both arms to guard his face.

“Magical☆Pawwwnnnnch-!”

Glen then moved his leg in an upward arc. Breaking through the gaps of Jhin’s guard, Glen stuck the side of Jhin’s head with a tornado-like roundhouse kick.

“GyAAAAAAAA—!?”

Viciously struck, Jhin fell to the floor in an exaggerated motion.

“Let me explain. [The Iron Fist of Magic – Magical☆Punch] is a spell that uses some magical-like force that I don’t know about. It raises the power of my punch about two times, and its force is comparable to the kick. Anyway, it’s an amazing punch of magic.”

“Rather… it’s not a punch, but a kick… right…”

“Damnit… I of all people…! To a … stupid guy like….-! Gaha….”

Leaving behind these last words, Jhin’s consciousness faded to black.

Sistina felt a bit of pity for him.

Chapter 5: The Fool and the Black Reaper.

“And that’s done.”

After knocking Jhin unconscious, Glen cautiously waited for his sealing magic to run out, and used the spell [Magic · Rope] to bind Jhin’s hands and legs. Then, he used [Spell · Seal] to prevent Jhin from using magic, and applied [Sleep · Sound] on top of that. Finally, Glen stripped Jhin completely, tied him in a turtle bind, and drew atrocious drawings all over his body. To top it all off, he stuck a piece of paper to his crotch. Written on it, was the word ‘impotent’.

<TL Note: 不能, can imply impotency. At the same time it means incapacitated/unable.>

“Hah—, he won’t be able to do anything like this. My my, this is why it’s so troublesome to take a magician prisoner.”

Just as Sistina was thinking that it wasn’t necessary to go that far, a man’s shirt was thrown over her shoulder.

“Sensei…?”

Sistina turned her head to the side, and saw Glen in a tank top. He was looking away from her, as to avoid seeing her immodest appearance.

“It was scary right? Are you hurt?”

“I’m fine… because sensei saved me.”

“I see. It’s good that I made it in time then. Alright I’ll undo the [Magic · Rope] right now.”

Glen chanted the incantation for the black magic [Dispel · Force], and dispelled the effects of [Magic · Rope] and [Spell · Seal] that had restricted Sistina.

With her arms now free, Sistina pushed her arms through the sleeves of Glen’s shirt, and buttoned it.

“S-, Sensei… you…”

Unable to bear the silence, Sistina called out to Glen.

“Don’t ask. Please.”

And Glen awkwardly rejected her.

“I get it already… I don’t have the right to teach anyone. My hands are too dirty for me to be qualified to guide anyone…”

“No, that’s not what I’m talking about. Uhm… your pants fell off you know?”

“Ooh-!?”

It seems like the final roundhouse kick had loosened the metal fastener on the belt. At some point, his pants had fallen to his feet, and his underwear was exposed to the world.

“Ah, geez, damnit! This is why I don’t like this cheap stuff—!”

“Sensei, you’re really careless aren’t you…”

Seeing Glen’s dumb appearance as he pulled up his pants, there was nothing more that Sistina could say.

“But… It’s good that you’re alive…”

“Hm? Did you say something?”

“Not really.”

In an unhappy manner, Sistina turned her head away.

“…? Well that’s fine. Anyway, tell me about the situation, White Cat. What is happening here?”

“Ah… Yes…”

Sistina told him about the series of events that happened— Two magicians calling themselves terrorists had entered the classroom, restrained them, and locked them in. Hearing that none of the students had been sacrificed, Glen felt relieved. However— “Lumia was taken away?”

“…Yes.”

Sistina showed a frustrated expression, and turned her gaze downwards.

“Why her?”

“I don’t know.”

“I see… but if that’s the case, was I too hasty?”

“Sensei?”

“Ah—, no, sorry. I was just talking to myself. Since I managed to saved you, my judgment was correct.”

Then—

The sharp sound of metals clattering against each other rung throughout the room.

Just as Sistina’s body froze in surprise, Glen furrowed his brows, and took out the half-gemstone from his pocket.

“What the heck Serika!? You’re late! What were you doing this entire time you idiot!”

“Sorry about that. I was in the middle of a speech, so I turned off the receiving capability.”

The voice that came from the gemstone was definitely belonged to Serika, who was currently at the capital a fair distance away from Fejiti.

“Something crazy happened over here you know!?”

“…What happened?”

A stiffness could be felt in the voice coming from the gemstone.

“Ah, actually…”

……

……

“Is that all true?”

“Like I would joke around about something like this. It wouldn’t be funny.”

Glen nervously scratched his head.

“Anyway, the culprits are the Wisdom of the Heavens Research Society. They

managed to seize the barrier and lock down the academy. It's no longer possible to get in, and there are about 50 students being held hostage, all of which have been restrained and locked inside a classroom. Of the hostages, one of them has been rescued, while another seems to have been taken to the person behind all this."

"The Wisdom of the Heavens Research Society hm… I didn't think that that group of good-for-nothings would come…"

"The enemy's force consists of three people, and one of whom is unknown. Of the three, two of them have been restrained. However, the last person is probably bad news. At any rate, the last person probably won't be any weaker than the two before."

"Is your original magic [The Fool's World] not going to work?"

"My original magic will only work if they're not aware of it. The enemy isn't stupid enough to let me use it three times."

"I suppose so."

"Finally, the most important part… I know that the magic security system of the academy is top-notch. However, the system has been completely put under their jurisdiction… So there has to be a traitor within the academy."

"Ah, I think so as well."

"Hey Serika, are there any professors or lecturers on your side that went missing? Especially professors, or any lecturers of that level."

"I don't know. We aren't moving together as a group, so it's impossible for me to confirm whether or not anyone's missing."

"Tch… then explain the situation and confirm it! Also, hurry up and get the imperial court magicians moving to help me out!"

"That impossible. You should already know this, but magical academies are places where various political parties fight for face and authority. If I call them right now… they won't be able to get there quickly."

"Are you retarded? Stop kidding around! The lives of students are at stake you know!? Just use your authority and do something!"

“Right now I’m nothing but a normal magician. If people could freely exercise the authority of their past positions, then this nation would be in trouble.”

“Then hurry up and come back! The school has a teleportation circle right!?”

“Calm down. Do you think the people who would go to the extent of seizing the barrier would leave the teleportation circle functional? If it were me, I’d have destroyed it immediately. Well, I’ll try it out, but don’t expect anything.”

“Ku….”

She was completely right. A teleportation circle could be used as the origin and destination for long distance transfer magic. If the circle linking the capital and the academy was still functional, then reinforcements would soon arrive from the capital. Thus, taking out this teleportation circle would be the first priority of any well-thought-out terrorist plan.

Glen pressed on his head, as though he was embarrassed by his own behavior, and released a long sigh.

“…Sorry. I wasn’t thinking calmly.”

“People don’t really change on the inside do they? You’re just the same as you were. Anyway, I’ll quickly come up with some countermeasure, so don’t push yourself. Just protect the students and hide with them in a safe place.”

“Ah, got it.”

“Well, I’ll hang up now… Don’t die ok?”

“Like I would die in a place like this.”

Canceling the communication magic, Glen returned the gemstone to his pocket.

“Hm? What’s up?”

Glen noticed Sistina staring at him.

“No… Uhm… It’s a bit unexpected…”

“Huh?”

“I thought that… uhm… Sensei was a bit colder than this…”

Glen turned his gaze away, as if he didn't care about what Sistina had said.

"Erm… The person just now… was professor Alfornea, right?"

"Mhmm."

"Will she be able to call for help?"

"Do you think she'll be able to, hearing the conversation just now?"

Hearing that, Sistina dejectedly lowered her shoulders.

A short while later, she rose up with a resolved expression, and moved to leave the room.

"Oi where are you going? White Cat."

Glen pulled on her arm to stop her.

"I'm going to save Lumia."

"Stop. Are you asking to die pointlessly?"

"But…But, Lumia… In order to protect me, Lumia…"

"What do you think you can do on your own? You should know already right? Be a little more mature."

"But… still…-!"

"…Be a little more mature."

"But… I'm frustrated… I mean…"

"O-, Oi… White Cat…?"

"I mean… uu… hick… uwaaaan…."

All the emotions that she had held inside burst out in a single moment. In front of Glen, who was at a loss for words, she began to wail like a child.

"You were right sensei! Something like magic isn't anything good! It's because of this… Because of this, Lumia is… Lumia is… hick…u,–…"

"…Stop crying, idiot."

Glen placed his hand gently on Sistina's head.

"Sensei…?"

“Since magic already exists, it is unrealistic to hope for it to not exist. What’s important is for us to consider what to do with it… That’s what your best friend said. My-oh my, my ideology had stagnated for a long time didn’t it? Maybe I’m getting old?”

Glen showed a gentle expression that was unbecoming of his lazy and audacious personality. Towards this unexpected display, Sistina couldn’t help but feel a bit anxious.

“You know, that girl Lumia, in order to prevent this kind of thing from happening in the future, she hopes to rise to a position where she can guide the magical world in the right direction. Isn’t that stupid? It’s still admirable though.”

“Does she… believe that?”

“Yeah, so she can’t die here… I won’t let her.”

Saying that, Glen’s eyes flared with resolve.

“I’ll be going now. Once I confirm the location of the two remaining enemies, I’ll assassinate them. There’s no other choice.”

Assassination. Hearing Glen say that without hesitation, Sistina felt a frightening chill down her spine. However, more than that, she felt a sense of dread. Although Glen’s eyes were filled with cold, murderous intent… she couldn’t help but feel that he was suffering.

“Kuha, KuhaHAHAHA….”

Suddenly, a dry laugh spread through the room.

“…Assassination, huh? Kekeke, I never thought you would say that like it was nothing… at first I thought you were just ‘different’… but what’s this all of a sudden? You’re not all that different from us in the end after all…Kuhaha…”

Jhin had already recovered consciousness. It seemed that the effect of [Sleep · Sound] had been too weak. Glen clicked his tongue and glanced at Jhin.

“I won’t deny that. In the very end, I’m a lowlife, just like you.”

“Hm? Then aren’t you gonna kill me? Or is it because you can’t do that in front of your cute little student?”

“Don’t group yourselves with sensei!”

Sistina angrily shouted at Jhin, whose comments were displeasing to her.

“Sensei is different from you! Compared to you, who treats people like trash, and would kill someone without hesitation—”

“Kuhaha! And how much do you know about him!? To you, he’s just a temporary instructor that you’ve only just met, right?”

“T-, That’s…”

Sistina went silent. It’s true that she had only known Glen for about twenty days. To her, she was nothing but a ‘mysterious instructor that had been brought in by Serika’. She didn’t know a thing about his past.

“I’m just gonna say this straight. This guy is definitely up to no good. Who knows how many people he’s already killed… He’s a real devil on the inside, just like me. That’s just the kind of person he is, and his eyes say it all. I totally understand.”

Sistina hoped that Glen would deny something, anything.

However, Glen remained silent. It was a silence that served as confirmation.

Then, suddenly, the room began to shake from the magic power permeating through the atmosphere, and the space around them began to ripple like water.

“Wha—!?”

From the rippling space, unidentifiable objects began to emerge.

They were skeletons, standing on two legs, and armed with swords and shields. There were about ten of them. No, rather, it would be more accurate to say that they kept increasing in number— “You’re finally here! Nice! Brother Reick!”

Jhin cheerily shouted.

Glen and Sistina were surrounded by the skeletons in an instant.

“S-, Sensei… this is—”

“Damnit, to think that they would use Bone Golems!? Not only that, but they’re all made with top-grade, alchemically-refined dragon teeth! You guys are being really generous with your cards, aren’t you!?”

The summoning magic [Call · Familiar]. Usually, this was a magic used to summon familiars that were about the size of small animals, however, the caster of this magic was able to use his handcrafted golems as familiars, and summon them from a long distance. It was a frightening high-level ability. On top of all that, because they were made with dragon teeth, they each had abnormal levels of strength, mobility, stability, and were capable of resisting the three primary elements. It was an opponent that could not be handled by normal fighters or magicians.

“More importantly, is his multi-tasking ability some kind of joke!? Is he even human!?”

There was no time to admire the caster’s frightening abilities.

One of bone golems swung its sword at Sistina.

“Kyaa-!?”

“Back off!”

Glen immediately got between them. Using his left hand, he hit the body of the sword to deflect it, and with his left hand, he punched the golem’s head with all his might. But— “Tch, it’s hard!?”

The impact of the strike had pushed the golem back, but there wasn’t even a single scratch on its skull.

Recovering its poise, the Golem swung the sword again—

“Didn’t you drink a bit too much milk!? Go and drink some soda!”

It was nigh impossible to deal physical damage to golems made of dragon teeth, so the result of punching them goes without saying. However, even the three primary elements – Fire, Frost, and Lightning – wouldn’t have an effect on them.

In order to defeat them, raw magical force was necessary.

(I need to use [Weapon · Enchant]! Shit, I don’t have the time.)

Any attempt to cast magic was behind the bottleneck of three-stage chants. So it was hard to use it flexibly.

Glen resolved to take about two slashes, and prepared to chant—

“<Let light shine upon that sword>-!”

Sistina completed the one-stage chant for the black magic [Weapon · Enchant].

Glen’s fists were enveloped in a bright light, which signified the presence of magic power.

“Sensei!”

“Sorry, thanks!”

Giving his thanks, Glen swiftly dashed forward.

With three quick flashes, the skulls of the golems on the left, right, and center were shattered.

“<Oh the great winds>!”

Following that, Sistina chanted the black magic, [Gale · Blow].

A violent gust of wind pushed the golems blocking the doorway aside.

Although it didn’t do any damage, it opened a path to exit the room.

“Nice! Let’s go, White Cat!”

“Y-, Yes!”

Sistina ran along this path to exit the experimentation room.

Two golems immediately turned to attack her.

“As if I would let you!”

Glen, who followed closely behind Sistina, punched and kicked the golem aside.

And thus, they barely managed to escape the room.

Without a moment to rest, the two of them continued rushing down the hallway.

“Sensei, where are we going!?

“Who knows!?”

Then—

“Gyaaaa—!?”

From behind them came a dreadful cry.

“W-, Wait!? W-, Why me… AHHHHHHHHHHH————!?”

The sound of something sharp piercing through something soft could be heard. Accompanying it was a painful and dreadful cacophony. Sistina covered her mouth, her face pale.

“We don’t have a reason to save him, and we didn’t have the time to anyway.”

Glen’s cold voice seemed to be talking to himself.

“More importantly, what happens to one, may happen to us all. Here they come.”

After dealing with Jhin, the golems rushed out of the room—

“—Fu!”

Glen fired a straight punch.

And the skull of the bone golem in front of him shattered.

“<Oh the great winds>-!”

Sistina had once again cast [Gale · Blow]

The squall that formed around her arms blew away the bone golems that were chasing after them.

“This way!”

“Yes!”

Reaching the end of the hallway, the two quickly rushed up the stairs to the next floor.

The bone golems insistently chased after them.

“Damnit, this isn’t getting any better…”

There were simply too many enemies for Glen’s magically enhanced fists to beat. Although Sistina’s magic could buy them some time, it was unable to land a

killing blow on the bone golems.

Thus, they had no choice but to keep running.

Furthermore, Sistina's magic power wasn't unlimited. Despite the fact that Sistina's magic power was top notch from an affinity standpoint, using magic non-stop from the beginning of the ordeal would have left her reserves pretty exhausted..

"Sensei! Golems are categorized as magical creatures right!?"

Sistina shouted at Glen, breathless, as they ran down the hall.

"Can't you do something with your original magic!?"

"I can't!"

Glen replied immediately.

"My magic, [The Fool's World], only stops the activation of magic! It's meaningless to use it against magic that's already been completely realized! If I had to give an example, it would be those guys!"

Glen cast a bitter glance towards the golems chasing after them.

"Rather, to deal with those guys we should be using [Dispel · Force] to counterbalance the magic inside them."

"If it's like that then I can do it! Should we try!?"

"Wha!? You can use it!? Isn't it a pretty high level spell!?"

"Yes, but I didn't learn it from the academy. I learned it from my father…"

"You're quite the honor student aren't you… but it's pointless. Don't even think about it."

"Why!?"

"Even if you dispel the magic inside them, they'll just return to dragon teeth… their beginning state. As long as the spellcaster sends magic power back to them, they'll just return to their golem forms and attack us. Basically, don't bother wasting your magic power."

"—!?"

“Just compare the amount of the magic power required to cast [Dispel · Force] with that of what’s already inside the target object. In order to function in a semi-automatic manner, each of these guys have their own built-in magic circuit. If you use [Dispel · Force] to deal with them one-by-one, you’re gonna exhaust yourself in an instant you know? Either way, the support of your magic is necessary right now.”

“Then what about Sensei, you have more ample magic power to use [Dispel · Force]—”

“It’s even more pointless for me to do it. After reciting a really long incantation, and expending a large amount of magic power, I can only temporary cut down their numbers. At that point, I might as well punch them with magically-enhanced fists. The same goes for stopping them from reusing the golem!”

“But at this rate—”

Arriving at the next floor, the two once again returned to the hallway.

“Sensei!? Ahead is—”

“Ah, there’s nowhere to go, is there.”

As Sistina had observed, at the end of this hallway was a dead end.

“W-, What are we going to do!?”

“I’ll stop them here. Go to the deep end of this hallway… and improvise an incantation on the fly.

“Eh!?”

“The magic I want you to change is your specialty, [Gale · Blow]. Lower the force, increase the area, and keep up its effect for an extended period of time. At the same time, limit yourself to a maximum of three-stages. Once you’re done, give me the signal, and I’ll do something about this.”

“B-, But…”

Sistina moved closer to Glen, and looked up at him.

“I-, I don’t know if I can do something so high-level…”

“It’ll be fine.”

Glen replied with an air of confidence.

“Though you’re cheeky, you’re outstanding, but you’re cheeky.”

“Don’t put such a strong emphasis on cheeky!”

“If you can understand the contents of the latest lecture then you should be able to do this. Rather, you have to do this. If you can’t I’m gonna mark you down.”

“H-, How unreasonable…”

But because Glen acted as foolishly as usual, Sistina’s anxieties were eased. Whether or not Glen did it on purpose, no one would know.

“… I understand. I’ll do it.”

“Alright, then go ahead!”

“Yes!”

Glen stopped and turned around to face the crowd of bone golems.

Sistina ran ahead, leaving Glen alone.

“Ooooo—!”

Glen’s punch shattered the bone golem in front of him.

And the bone golems attacked Glen like a surging wave.

This’ll work. I thought this might be the case when that delinquent guy was attacked, but these guys can only follow simple commands like ‘prioritize the nearest person’. Then as long as I stay alive, they won’t be able to reach White Cat. I alone am enough for a barrier.

Glen retreated step-by-step to dodge the countless swords swung at him.

Then, taking advantage of the gaps in their defense, he destroyed the golems.

However, none of it mattered in the face of overwhelming numbers. He couldn’t fully avoid the blades of the bone golems that hadn’t fallen, cuts began to form on his body.

Tch… I need to limit my movements as much as possible, and focus on dodging

the fatal attacks… That way I can buy as much time as possible… The rest is up to you, White Cat.

Arriving at the end of the hallway and catching her breath, Sistina quickly began to rearrange the incantation for the black magic [Gale · Blow].

She could see Glen heroically fighting at the midsection of the corridor.

“<Wind—become calm—>, no that won’t work, the force will——— <Storm—run rampant> ———”

Based on Glen’s teachings on magic syntax and formulation, Sistina ran simulations in her mind. What were the effects of the change in runic language on her inner consciousness? Slowly but surely, she arrived closer to her desired result.

On the other hand, Glen, who was in front of her, was slowly being wounded. Seeing the red trail that leaked from his body as he moved, Sistina felt a tinge of distress in her chest. Everytime Glen failed to dodge an attack cleanly, and lost balance, she felt a knot in her heart. It didn’t seem like he could hold on much longer. Faced with the immense burden on her shoulders, Sistina desperately resisted the urge to hold her head in her arms and blank out.

“<Obstructing Winds—Rejecting Winds—Barrier of Wind>? If I want to extend the time then—”

Despite all that, Glen didn’t turn and run away. Glen dove left and right to dodge the fierce attacks, all for the sake of buying just a little bit more time.

Sistina noticed. His unyielding spirit and unwillingness to retreat wouldn’t be possible if he didn’t trust her. Though everything that came out of his mouth was nothing less than hateful, he trusted her.

Glen visage, fighting in the face of despair, gave Sistina courage.

There’s no way I can betray his trust.

“Reduce the speed of the incantation to twenty-two… and with a voice tension of forty-five…”

Sistina wasn’t strong. She only put up a strong front so that she could match

up to her household's name. In reality, she was weaker and more cowardly than anyone, and in truth, Sistina had already realized that.

Even if it's just for now… Let me be strong like Lumia, who didn't retreat a single step in the face of the enemy… Let me be strong like sensei…-!

Both Lumia and Glen had saved her before. If it wasn't for them, she won't be able to stand here right now. If she hadn't died—then she would have been broken.

That's why— Let me be the ones to help them this time!

Finally—

With a flash of spirit, Sistina decided on the runic form she was going to use. The incantation was complete.

"Sensei, it's done!"

The moment Glen heard Sistina's shout, he immediately sprinted down the hall towards Sistina. It was as if he had been waiting for this moment for a long time.

Of course, the bone golems hurriedly chased after him.

"How many stages!?"

"Three!"

"Alright! Once I give you the signal start the chant! Give them everything you got!"

Glen ran and ran.

The golems chased and chased.

"Now! Do it!"

"<Obstruct and reject · ——"

The distance between Glen and Sistina shortened and shortened.

"<——Oh barrier of storm · ——"

Ten paces —— Five paces —— Three Paces ——

“——Bring tranquility to their legs> ——!”

Glen jumped and rolled across the floor next to Sistina.

During that time, the incantation was completed, and an explosive gust of wind emitted from Sistina’s hand.

It wasn’t a concentrated flurry of wind like that of [Gale · Blow]. It was a storm that covered the width of the corridor that was focused in a direction.

If one had to give it a name, it would be the ‘modified black magic [Storm · Wall]’. With Sistina as the origin, the magic created a wall of wind that continuously blew in an outward direction, which reduced the speed at which the golems could advance.

However—

“N-, No… I can’t stop them completely… Sorry, sensei…-!”

Since it was improvised on the spot, the force wasn’t enough. The golems pushed against the current and gradually advanced. It was just a matter of time until they reached them. Sistina felt sweat trickle down her body.

“No, you did well. Thanks for the help.”

Despite that, Glen rose to his feet with ragged breaths.

With a pop, he flicked a small crystal into the air and caught it in his left hand as it dropped.

Then, Glen tightly grasped his left hand with his right.

“The magic I’m about to use can’t be chanted halfheartedly alright…? Keep this up for a bit.”

Taking a deep breath, Glen closed his eyes, and began his chant.

“<I am the one who slays the gods · ——…”

Taking his time—

“<I am the one who knows the origin’s beginning and end · ——…”

Deliberately and slowly—

Glen exerted high levels of magic power, and focused his consciousness to weave each and every phrase.

As Glen continued, three magic circles – facing horizontal, vertical and level – formed with his left fist as the origin. As if they were gears of a machine, each of the circles began slowly began to turn and accelerate.

“…Eh? You’re kidding…”

Sistina realized the true form of the spell that Glen was chanting.

“T-, That magic is…”

“<Return this to the providence of the cycle · Return all that is composed of five elements to the five elements · In order to unweave the binds of anomaly and logic · the creations of nature shall hereby scatter · —”

Then—

Glen jumped in front of Sistina, who had frozen in shock.

“—To the end of the distant void>—!”

Completing all seven-stages, the great incantation that enveloped his entire body was completed.

“Go! Get blown away you mobs! Modified black magic [Extinction · Ray]—!”

「《我は神を斬獲せし者・我は始原の祖と終を知る者・――》」
ゆっくりと。殊更にゆっくりと。
グレンは魔力を高めながら、
意識を集中させ、一句一句呪文を紡いでいく。
「ええい！　ぶッ飛べ、有象無象！
黒魔改【イクスティンクション・レイ】――ッ！」
「……え？　嘘……？」

Glen opened his left hand and thrust his palm forward.

Then, the three magic circles centered around his hand expanded and shifted forward.

In the next moment, a giant beam of light was released from Glen's left palm. Passing through the three magic circles, the beam continued in a straight line to the end of the hallway.

What followed could only be called 'annihilation'. Everything in the path of the beam… the bone golems, the ceiling, the walls; All of it had been devoured by the beam of light. In an instant, all had been vaporized without a trace.

Finally, the blindingly radiant sunlight settled into the empty space.

Silence. Stillness. There was not a single moving object that could be seen.

"…Eh?"

The abrupt ending of this crisis caused Sistina to enter a trance. The roof of the corridor had completely disappeared, along with the walls on the right hand side. The view beyond could be clearly seen. A long cylindrical shape had been cut from the corridor. A gentle breeze blew through the corridor that had become an outdoors area.

"A-, Amazing… Such a high level spell…"

The modified black magic [Extinction · Ray]. It was a spell that would completely disintegrate the target to its original elements. It was the most powerful magic amongst those that could be chanted by a single user — Serika Alfornea had devised this magic in the 'Great Magic War' two hundred years ago in order to kill the apostle of an evil god. It was an original magic that neared the power of a true god-slaying technique.

It appeared that Glen had used a magical catalyst when he chanted this magic… but even so, the ability to use this magic was something worthy of praise and amazement.

"It was a bit overkill, there was no other choice for me… guh, ho…-!"

Glen threw up blood and collapsed.

“Sensei!?”

Sistina rushed to Glen, and touched his body. His entire body was drenched in sweat, and his body was cold to the point where anyone would be horrified.

“This is… mana deficiency sickness!?”

Mana deficiency sickness was a shock-symptom that occurred after an extreme exhaustion of magic power. The source of magic power was mana inside the body, and the true nature of mana was one’s life force. If mana was suddenly depleted, then it goes without saying that one’s life would be endangered. In reality, magic was a double edged sword that one would trade their life to use.

“Well… I did use a trick to forcefully use a magic that’s beyond my own capacity…”

Although Glen always seemed to be relaxed, right now he showed an agonizing, distorted expression.

Regardless of his mana deficiency, his body’s in a terrible state. He’s bleeding heavily from the wounds. Though there aren’t any fatal ones, there are too many of them. If he keeps bleeding at this rate — it’ll be bad.

“A-, Are you alright!?”

“If this can be called ‘alright’, then you need to go see a doctor…”

Even at this crucial juncture, he was still sharp-tongued as usual.

“<Oh angel of affection · Bring tranquility onto this person · With a gentle hand of aid>”

Sistina used the white magic used for healing [Life · Up] to treat Glen’s wounds. However, Sistina specialized in black magic – which pertained to movement and energy – and alchemy – which pertained to objects and elements. Thus she wasn’t proficient in white magic like [Life · Up], which pertained to the body and spirit. With her current skills, treating these wounds would take a vast amount of time and magic power.

“Idiot, this isn’t the time for that…”

Glen wiped the fresh blood off the corner of his mouth and stood up. His knees trembled as he forced himself on his two feet.

“We need to hurry up and get away from here…. And find a place to hide…”

Glen showed a bitter expression.

“Our opponent isn’t so naïve as to give us the time to do something like this… damnit.”

Clack—

From the remnants of the destruction came the sound of heavy steps.

“To think that you would be able to use [Extinction · Ray]. It seems like I’ve underestimated you.”

The silhouette that could be seen across the corridor was—

The dark-coated man, Reick.

“—!?”

Sistina held her breath.

This was the worst possible timing. Glen was already heavily wounded.

Furthermore, floating behind Reick were five swords. There were most likely Reick’s magic tools. Since they were already activated, Glen’s [The Fool’s World] would not have any effect.

“Ah-, geez, I already have bad feeling about this just by seeing the floaty swords… Those swords definitely move according to the owner’s will, or move automatically using the skills of master swordsmen that are inscribed on them, right? Goddamn.”

“Glen Ryders. The investigation said that you were a third-rate, third-rank magician… but for you to have defeated two people was beyond my expectations. I made a miscalculation.”

“Don’t kid me. One of them was totally killed by your hands. Don’t blame it on anyone else.”

“He had disobeyed his orders, gave up on the mission, and began to do as he pleased. That was merely punishment for that. I’m not a saint. I wouldn’t grant charity to a dog that wouldn’t listen to simple command.”

“Ah, is that right? Well that’s kinda harsh.”

Glen whispered into Sistina's ear.

"Oi, White Cat, still got any magic power to spare? Can you dispel those swords?"

Sistina glanced at the swords floating by Reick. She could tell just by looking at them that each of them carried a vast amount of magic power. It was also probable that each one carried a magic enhancement circuit inside as well.

"Even if I use all my remaining magic power it probably won't be enough… I think. In the first place, he won't give me the time to chant [Dispel · Force]"

"Alright then."

Suddenly, Glen pushed Sistina aside.

"…Eh?"

Sistina had been shoved towards the right side, where Glen's [Extinction · Ray] had carved a hole – as in, outside the campus building.

"Wa――KYAAaaaaa―!?"

Accompanying the loss of balance, Sistina free-fell from the fourth floor of the building.

She seemed to have casted [Gale · Blow] as she fell in order to decrease the velocity of the fall. The only sound that could be heard from outside was that of a squall of wind.

"Hmph, so you let her get away."

"I guess so. Well, with you as my enemy I can't spare any attention to protect her. So, what now? Are those conspicuous magic swords a counter-strategy against me?"

"Ahah… was I found out?"

There's no need to ask a stupid question like 'How did you know?'. Farsight magic, sense synchronization with his familiars, reading the memory of objects… There were an infinite number of ways that magicians could gather information.

"Seeing Jhin being defeated so one-sidedly without being able to do anything, this was the only method I could think of. Furthermore, you didn't use that

strange magic against the bone golems. Basically, that means it is a special magic that seals the activation of magic. If that's the case, then as long as I activate magic beforehand, there won't be any problems… Let's go."

Reick snapped his fingers, and the swords behind him collectively pointed towards Glen.

Then, they flew in a straight line towards him.

"I knew it—!"

Glen desperately whipped his wounded body to and fro to dodge.

"O…owowow… Geez, why did he do that… that guy!"

The endpoint of her fall was the academy's main courtyard. There, Sistina lay spread-eagle on the ground.

Since she had used the black magic [Gale · Blow] to reduce her falling speed, it felt as though she had fallen five or six steps of stairs…

"Is this the way you're supposed to treat a girl!? If I couldn't chant the magic in time what did he plan to do!? Geez!"

Despite her shouting, Sistina's heart rapidly fell into a solemn state.

Thinking about it calmly, it was evident that Glen had done this to protect her.

The mass activation of bone golems, the repeated use of a remote summoning technique that was amongst the highest-levels of summoning magic, and an arsenal of magic swords. The dark coated man had revealed so many frightening techniques, all of which were far more threatening than what the delinquent man had done. Just comparing her chances of surviving if she were to be caught in the unconventional fight between magicians to her chances of surviving if she were to fall from the school building would be dumb.

Though Glen had suddenly pushed Sistina without so much as a warning, it showed how much faith he had in Sistina. She understood that much, but…

"In the end, I'm… just in the way…"

It was true that Glen had said that 'the support of your magic is necessary' to

Sistina.

However, didn't that come with the condition of 'having to protect Sistina'? 'Dodging the enemy attacks', 'chanting spells', 'Protect Sistina'. If he only had to choose two from these three options then… maybe Glen wouldn't have faced as many problems? If Glen had been alone to begin with, would they have been in a situation where they were pursued?

In the first place, why had they been chased by a large amount of bone golems?

What had caused them to be discovered by the dark-coated man?

Wasn't it because Glen had saved Sistina?

Furthermore, it was evident that Glen's trump-card, his original magic [The Fool's World], had been revealed due to this. Yes, everything was because of her.

"—!?"

From above, the sound of objects crashing against one another could be heard. It seemed that the battle had begun.

If that was the case, then there was nothing more that Sistina could do.

"What sensei said is the only choice I…"

Sistina lowered her shoulders and silently stood in place. Haven taken a mental blow from her own inability and powerless, Sistina felt like her vision fading.

However, it was then that Sistina noticed—

"…what sensei said?"

She felt a slight discomfort as she thought about it.

And so, Sistina stood there, pondering the true identity of that discomfort.

From the left. From the right. From the front. The swords slashed one after another.

The sword sliced through the air, and the blade's point drew closer—

"Haah—!"

Glen parried one with his left, struck down another with his right, and shifted his body to dodge a third.

The three swords tried to cut apart Glen. Each had skills, speed, and deftness comparable to that of a master.

However, the movements were simple and inorganic, so he could somehow manage for now but—

Suddenly, two swords came in from directly above and behind Glen.

The two swords aimed for the moment that Glen stopped moving. It was as if they had a consciousness.

Although Glen turned his body to dodge, the two swords that had grasped the perfect timing cut into his back.

“Gah—!”

A crimson flower blossomed from his body. Since Glen had responded appropriately, the wounds weren’t deep. However, they weren’t anything to scoff at either.

“Tc-h—”

Glen jumped backwards, and leaned his back against the wall.

Each of the swords took their time to surround Glen.

“How bothersome… You bastard… you can use both types?”

Yes. The man before him – Reick, controlled the five swords. Amongst them, two would act according to the will of the spellcaster, whilst the other three would move automatically using the skills of master swordsmen that had been inscribed onto them.

“Well said. Although the swords can perfectly imitate the skills of master swordsmen, the swordsmanship is still that of an inorganic object. In the face of a master, having five of these would still be meaningless. However, if I manually control all of them, I, as a magician, still won’t be able to match the skills of a master. After assassinating dozens of knights and magicians, I’ve come to the conclusion that three automated swords, and two manual swords is the strongest combination.”

“Goddamnit…”

Glen was completely suppressed. In this situation, he was at an extreme disadvantage.

In truth, it would be far easier to deal with five automated or five manual swords. However, the combination of automatic and manual swords made it hard to find an opportunity to take advantage of.

“However, you don’t seem like a magician at all.”

The movements of the manual swords showed no signs of amateurism. Rather, it would be prudent to say that they were first-rate. If this man could realize those such movements from a distance, than his swords skills were surely nothing to scoff at either. Surely, any ordinary swordsman would immediately die were they to face this man in a swordfight.

In general, magicians tended to turn a blind eye towards training in the physical arts. Instead, they would focus all their attention on cultivating their mind and spirit. Thus, whilst this direction was different, this man also deviated from conventional magicians.

“The pointless chatter ends here.”

Reick swung his arm.

In response, the two manual swords began to close in on Glen. Although the adeptness of their skills weren’t quite at the level of the automated ones, they were able to adapt to varying situations. These conscious swords seemed to be playing with their prey.

Then— from the corner of Glen’s vision came three flashes of silver.

“Tch—”

While the movements were simple, their speed and sharp movements attacked Glen from his blind spots.

In response, Glen moved his hands to strike two swords off their course.

Then, he moved as little as he could to avoid being fatally injured by the other three that came from the side. The blades that grazed by left fresh cuts on his body.

After the series of attacks ended, Glen judged that this was one of his few opportunities to counterattack.

“<Oh crimson lion · With a torrent of rage—

As Glen landed on the ground, he began to chant a spell.

The magic spell he had chosen was the black magic [Blaze · Burst]. The spell gathered heat energy, and released it in the form of a ball. When the ball hits the target, it would burst into flames and explode. It was a powerful military-grade offense magic that would mow down everything caught in its wake.

If one were to be caught in the flames caused by [Blaze · Burst], there wouldn’t even be ashes remaining.

In a narrow space like this, there was no room to dodge.

“ · Roar ——”

However, before Glen could complete the three stage chant—

“<Disperse>”

Reick pointed his finger forward, and completed a one stage chant.

In that moment, the fireball that was generated in Glen’s left palm made a ‘pop’ sound, and dissipated into space in the form of magic power.

The black magic [Tri · Varnish]. It was a counterspell that would forcefully dissipate fire, frost, and lightning energy, and return it to its elementary state.

“Too slow, magic instructor.”

“Damnit—!”

Glen ground his teeth in frustration and jumped back to avoid the five swords that flew towards him from above. Carrying the momentum, the swords embedded themselves onto the ground.

“There’s no way a three-stage chant could beat a one-stage in a contest of chanting speed. [Blaze · Burst] should be chanted like this—”

Reick gazed coldly at Glen, who had avoided the five swords.

“<Flame lion—”

The extremely fast one-stage chant for the black magic [Blaze · Burst]. It was a high-level technique that would allow a single person to match an entire army.

Knowing that the magician before him could not use anything less than three-stage chants, Reick was almost certain that his move would bring forth a decisive end. However— "!"

Reick didn't think that Glen would immediately charge towards him as he began his one stage chant. Glen took out something from his pocket as he charged towards Reick— "<Oh fierce emperor of thunder · With a spear of aurora—"

Glen had begun a three stage chant that was impossible to complete before Reick's.

He had begun, despite being behind and unable to chant less phrases than the opponent. It was a foolish act that deviated from the unwritten rules of magic battles.

However—

"Tch—"

Reick killer instincts and senses allowed him to immediately understand Glen's intentions.

He canceled the activation of [Blaze · Burst] and jumped aside.

" · Pierce through>——!"

As if he was aiming for this gap, Glen completed his chant.

The black magic [Lightning · Pierce] appeared from Glen's finger, and moved rapidly through the air towards the center of Reick's body.

However— Reick had managed to recall the two manual swords, which crossed in front of him to deflect the spell.

"Tch— it didn't work huh."

Glen clicked his tongue.

Immediately, Reick snapped his fingers to command the automatic swords.

The automatic swords pulled away from the floor and began to attack Glen

once again.

Using his momentum, Glen rolled and jumped aside to dodge the sword's attacks.

"Are you kidding me, these swords are also enchanted with [Tri · Resist]. My— oh my, you're quite prepared for this. And here I thought I was going to score at least one with that play.

"…You bastard."

Seeing's Glen's actions, Reick felt his tongue twist.

The concept of mana biorhythm, was a measure the current state of the mana inside one's body. In its uncontrolled, basic state, the biorhythm was referred to as 'neutral', under control, the biorhythm was referred to as 'law', and the out of control state was referred to as 'chaos'.

To use magic, one most focus their mind and apply breathing techniques to get the biorhythm from the neutral to the law state. When using magic, one's biorhythm immediately jumps from the law state to the chaos state. Although there were varying extents of the 'chaos' state depending on the scale of magic used, on a fundamental level, it was impossible to avoid entering the chaos state immediately after using magic.

Also, in the chaos state, regardless of how great the magician was, it was impossible to use magic.

That was an absolute law of magic.

Glen actions just now – recklessly chanting [Lightning · Pierce] – was most likely a trap. If Reick completed the chant for [Blaze · Burst], then Glen would activate his sealing magic without hesitation to prevent the activation.

In that case, Reick, who hadn't activated any spell, but whose mana biorhythm entered a chaos state, would momentarily lose control of the magic swords. If Glen had been able to approach in that instant, then with his outstanding martial arts— On the contrary, if Reick had been too cautious of Glen's sealing magic, and had sent the swords to attack, then the result would be him getting struck by Glen's [Lightning · Pierce]. Thinking about it clearly, Glen's reckless three stage chant for [Blaze · Burst] was most likely a trap to create this

situation.

In that instant, Glen had carved two paths leading to Reick's death. Furthermore, Glen had completely grasped the amplitude of Reick's biorhythm. Beyond that, the guts and judgment to enact a plan that would lead to his demise were his timing slightly off— "Your name is Glen, correct? Just what kind of person are you?"

This wasn't something that could be done by a mere magic instructor. Rather, it was something that could only be done by a battle-worn magician.

Reick could no longer maintain the belief that 'Glen is a third-rate magician, who can't use anything faster than three stage chants, and only has an average amount of magic power.' While there was no doubt that Glen was still a third-rate magician, he was a 'powerful enemy' that would take Reick's life were he to make a single misstep.

If he had not cast [Tri · Resist] on his swords beforehand, then Glen's [Lightning · Pierce] would have readily penetrated through them, and he would have died.

"I'm just a magic instructor, a temporary one at that."

"I wonder… Well, fine. Now I see, the fact that you can choose the timing to seal off magic is a bit troubling."

"How so, I wonder? If you don't know when I'm gonna use this move, then why don't you just use some spells to test it out? I'm also gonna really recommend using those military-class spells of yours."

"Don't be foolish. Now that I have recognized your strength, I won't fall for the same trick twice you know?"

"Damnit, so you figured it out. I really hate people like you."

Seeing Glen's disgruntlement, Reick's lips curved into a cold smile.

"Rather, I want to show you my respect, after all, you are the first one who has matched me to this extent."

Glen thought the same.

As Glen was his opponent, he had to remain cautious of Glen's sealing magic,

and could not bring out his full potential as a result. If the opponent hadn't been Glen, he would've hurriedly summoned all his bone golems and commanded the five swords to attack. On top of that, he could cast an offensive spell for a repeated wave of attacks.

For Glen, there was no telling what Reick still had hidden up his sleeve. If that man were able to freely cast magic, just who could fight him on equal footing? Although Glen personally knew quite a few monstrous powerhouses, he couldn't think of anyone who could win against the man before him.

Is Serika the only person who could fight him in a direct confrontation?

If that was the case, then his opponent was truly an outrageous monster.

This is bad… What should I do?

The effects of the spell [Weapon · Enchant] that had been casted on his hands by Sistina were running out. The only reason he could deflect those swords with his fists was because they had been enhanced by magic power. If he hadn't been able to, he would already be long dead. Although he could reapply [Weapon · Enchant], there was no way that the opponent before him would give him to time to perform a three stage chant. His failed, desperate attempt at [Lightning · Pierce] further drove him into a corner— *On the contrary, the fact the effects of [Weapon · Enchant] is still active is quite astounding… that White Cat is pretty amazing isn't she? Though she's a bit cheeky.*

Unlike Glen, she had been born with far more. Although Sistina Phebell was still an immature, young girl, she was undoubtedly a genius.

At this point, I should get myself ready for anything…

Taking a deep breath, Glen rolled his hands into fists. It was his usual martial arts posture.

"Hmm. What are you planning now?"

Feeling that the next exchange of blows would be the last, Reick readied his posture without a single hint of carelessness.

As Reick rose his hand, the five swords pointed their ends towards Glen.

Then—

The atmosphere became tense.

It was as if the temperature of the corridor had dropped to a freezing temperature.

The seemingly everlasting silence was only but a moment.

Then—

“—Die!”

Reick sent the five swords forward.

“<~~ · —!”

At the same time, Glen covered his mouth with one hand, and began to chant an unknown spell.

“You idiot! Even if that’s a one stage chant, I’ll still be faster!”

It was just as Reick declared.

There was no way that Glen would make it in time with a three stage chant.

The five swords flew through the air like lightning .

Then, the sound of five sharp objects piercing through flesh could be heard.

The five swords embedded themselves deeply into Glen’s chest, stomach, shoulder, hand, and foot. Although he had twisted his body at the moment the swords hit to avoid a fatal wound — the winner of this fight had already been decided.

—Or so it appeared.

“—Maintaining the balance · Return to zero>!”

“What!? It was [Dispel · Force]!?”

The magic that removes the magic power from the target, and nullifies it – [Dispel · Force] – was activated.

The swords that were embedded in Glen’s body began to shine with white light —

“Surely, if that had worked, my swords would have become normal swords, but—”

It was a poor move. The magic power required the successfully use [Dispel · Force] was proportional to the amount in the target object. In the first place, this was a spell that was mostly used to disenchant objects. If one wanted to dispel magic tools that carried magic amplification circuits inside, then a massive amount of magic power – enough to exhaust the caster in an instant – would be needed. Dealing with an opponent’s magic tool with [Dispel · Force] was a poor move that defied common sense.

Thus, as should be expected, Glen’s [Dispel · Force] wasn’t enough to nullify

the magic power inside the swords. Whilst the magic power in the swords decreased, it was not a problem for Reick's long-distance control.

Once he pulled away the manual swords from Glen's body, and decapitated him using the retrieved swords — It would all be over.

"Your pointless struggle ends here. Die—"

Reick raised his hand into the air — it was then

"<Return to powerlessness>—!"

From the opposite direction, came the unexpected sound of a one-stage chant.

"What—!?"

At the end of the corridor was a human silhouette.

It was Sistina. Sistina, who had arrived there at some point, matched Glen's attempt at dispelling the swords, and casted [Dispel · Force] with all the magic power she had.

Reick had made two miscalculations. The first was that – knowing how cowardly Sistina was – he believed that she would run away, and that the chance of her returning was nil. The second was that he didn't think that Sistina would have this level of ability and magic power capacity.

Now, with the combination of Glen and Sistina's [Dispel · Force], the five swords that stabbed into Glen became normal swords—

"Ooooooo—!"

.

"Tch—*<Awaken blades—>*"

"Too late!"

Before Reick could reactivate the swords by sending magic power, Glen pulled out the arcana card of the fool.

In that instant, Glen's original magic – [The Fool's World] was activated.

In that area, the activation of all magic was sealed.

“Uwoooohh—!”

Glen threw the card aside, and pulled the sword on his shoulder—

—Then

“……”

Silence. The sword that Glen retrieved was completely pierced through Reick’s left chest.

‘pi-shhhhh’, a red liquid splattered across the floor.

“…Hmpf, well done.”

Reick didn’t move. Standing there, he congratulated the person who had stabbed him with the sword.

He didn’t think that catching one off guard was anything dishonorable, as he was a magician, not a knight. Regardless of whether it was a one-on-two or one-on-three, to him, the one who used every tactic and strategy at one’s disposal, the one who made the first move, and the one remained standing was the stronger party; And to be strong, is to be justice.

“Tch… making me do something so disgusting…”

<TL Note: The words for ‘disgusting’ 胸くそ悪い, has the word ‘chest’ 胸 inside it.>

Glen did not celebrate his victory. Rather, he felt the bitter aftertaste of it.

“I see… so it was the fool, huh. Now I understand.”

Looking at the arcana tarot of ‘the fool’ that lay on the group, Reick appeared to have comprehended something.

“Until recently, there was a person amongst the imperial court magicians whose specialty was killing magicians. Although their technique was completely unknown, this assassin that belonged to the empire had a magic that could seal off magic, and slaughtered the heretical magicians that tried to overturn society.

“……”

“He was active for a total of three years. During that brief period, even if I only count the number of master-level magicians confirmed to have fallen to his

hand, the number still amounts to twenty-four. Furthermore, all of them were powerful enough that it would be unimaginable for them to lose. The codename of the magician killer that caused fear in any magician, was —— 'The Fool'"

"… Is there anything you want to say?"

Seeing the cold and gloomy gaze, Reick's clips curved into a gruesome smile.

"I wonder?"

He left behind those last words.

Reick's fell to the floor, and ceased to breathe.

"Now…then…"

After confirming that Reick was dead, Glen leaned his back against the wall and collapsed.

"This… is also it for me… huh…"

It seemed that he had reached his limit. As he felt consciousness escaping him, he could hear the footsteps of someone running towards him and calling out his name— "What… a boring… life…"

Glen's consciousness fell into darkness—

Chapter 6: The reason I was unmotivated, when I was unemployed.

Let us briefly talk about the man named Glen Ryders.

About ten years ago, Serika, who was a member of the imperial court magicians at the time, picked up a certain boy, who had lost his family in a certain incident, on a whim. That boy was Glen.

For the sake of allowing this boy to live his life to the fullest, Serika had enlightened him to ‘magic’, and ever since then, Glen had been captivated by the mysterious world of magic. Although he didn’t have any special talent as a magician, he studied with a strong passion. Glen, who had loved magic from the very depths of his heart, was also showered with familial love by Serika.

Finally, Glen was accepted to Alzano Imperial Magic Academy, and it was during his time there that Glen discovered his peculiar talent. For some reason, Glen had a particularly strong affinity for techniques relating to stasis or stagnation of changes. Stasis and Stagnation, such was Glen’s “personality”. However, there was no use for such a talent for magicians that set their sights on creating change.

<TL Note: Spoken as ‘personality’, read as ‘magical affinity’>

As graduation approached, Glen, who was having trouble writing his graduation thesis, used his “personality” to create a certain original magic. Thus, [The Fool’s World] was born. Glen, who was a mediocre magician, and who didn’t have any particular achievements, used this technique as the basis for his thesis.

However, the magicians of the world saw no use for such magic, and mocked Glen for it. The heartless professors set fire to his thesis, and at the very end, there was not a single record left of Glen’s magic.

Yet, there was an organization that found a unique use for his “useless”

technique, and that was the famed and prestigious Imperial Court Magicians. They were the empire's strongest group of magicians that served as the personal sword of the empress.

After Glen's graduation, he was secretly taken away by the imperial court magicians. Serika was moved to tears, and gave her support and blessings to Glen, who had finally earned a splendid eminence. Glen was proud that his power would be used for the sake of the people.

Then.

Glen's hell began—

"U……Gu….."

Suddenly, Glen awoke. He felt terrible all over. His head shook uncontrollably, and a pain rang through his body as if it were fissured. However, the pain served as proof that he was still alive.

"Where is… this…?"

It seemed like he had been sleeping on a bed. The smell of antiseptic filled the air. Judging by the clear-white color of the rooms, this was the academy's medical room.

"Ah…are you awake…?"

Sistina sat on a chair beside Glen's bed, and pressed her outstretch palms against his body. Her hand shined with the warm light of the healing magic [Life · Up].

"…T-, Thank god… I thought that you might be done for…"

The corners of Sistina's eyes began to fill with tears.

"You idiot… geez… You really are an idiot… To do something so unreasonable…"

It seems that Sistina had moved him all the way here and provided emergency treatment. Glen looked at his own body. His wounds were all covered in blood-soaked bandages.

On the other hand, Sistina's condition looked worse for wear. The color of her face was nearly matched her hair's as a result of having moved the Glen, who was severely injured, all the way here. Her pretty face had been spoiled in such a manner. On top of that, it was likely that she had been casting [Life · Up] the entire time that Glen was unconscious. Her expression was dyed in dreadful fatigue, and the cold sweat and pale face were symptoms of mana deficiency sickness.

"Stop… that's enough… I'm fine… already…"

Seeing that Glen was trying to get up, Sistina hurriedly moved to stop him.

"T-, There's no way you could be fine! Your bleeding might have stopped, but not all your wounds have closed you know!?"

"To begin… you used a lot of magic power to cast [Dispel · Force]… you, if you keep forcing yourself like this, you'll die you know…"

"And you would be dead before that! Just be obedient already!"

"B…ut…"

"Hah… Geez, I'm still fine alright? Usually, I store magic little by little in this magic crystal, so I still have magic power to spare."

Saying that, Sistina showed the crystal pendant in her hand to Glen.

"In any case, you're the more important one here, since there's still one more enemy… so I need to do everything I can to help you recover…"

Understanding Sistina's reasoning, Glen sulkily turned his eyes away.

"My bad… I'll leave the recovery to you… sorry…"

"Hah… it would be great if you could act this way normally…"

As she gasped for air, Sistina continued to cast [Life · Up].

However, how could they continue like this? It was a strange situation where the enemy could attack at any time. If he was placed in the position of the enemy, he would definitely had taken this opportunity.

Trying to break the nervous, solemn atmosphere that permeated the air, Glen murmured.

“By the way… how… did you figure out what I was planning…?”

“Are you talking about overlapping the ‘dispel’s? It’s regrettable, but I think that I can understand sensei’s ‘rather unique’ thought patterns.”

She sighed again. It was one of the countless times she had sighed since meeting this man.

“If you really wanted me to run away on my own, then you won’t gone through the trouble of asking me how much magic power I had left. You won’t have said ‘alright then’ when you suddenly pushed me off either.”

“Haha… I thought that… It wouldn’t work… seven times out of ten…”

“It’s quite like you to do everything you can to not say ‘I believed in you’ at a time like this, isn’t it sensei… Geez.”

“You really are… excellent…”

“But I’m cheeky?”

“Don’t steal… my lines…”

“Yes yes.”

Sistina felt a bit relieved. If he could retort in such a way, then it showed that he was fine for now. Of course, it was still necessary to bring him to a real doctor or white magic specialist for immediate treatment.

“How do you feel sensei?”

“It hurts… My entire body hurts really bad… I want to cry.”

“This is already good by comparison you know? I adjusted the output of [Sleep · Sound] to numb your body you see.”

“It hurts… I’m gonna sleep… In any case… I won’t be able to do anything… right now…”

“Uwah, your attitude really does change quickly doesn’t it?”

“You… If the enemy comes… while I’m still asleep… leave me here and… run… alright?”

“There’s no way I can do that… Sensei?”

By the time she responded, Glen had already fallen asleep.

It seems that he lost consciousness once again.

From henceforth, the time passed peacefully.

‘Please don’t let the enemy attack at this time.’ As she prayed to the gods that she normally wouldn’t pray to, Sistina continued to sustain the effects of [Life · Up]. Allowing her consciousness to zone off, she adjusted her breathing, and continued to slowly release her magic power.

How much time has passed since then?

“…I wanted to be… a magician… of justice…”

“Eh?”

Suddenly, a small voice rung through the room. Sistina, whose consciousness had zoned off, pulled herself together once again.

Turning her eyes toward Glen, she found his eyes slightly open.

However, it seems that his conscious was still absorbed in some faraway land. He stared blankly at the ceiling.

“That’s why, I thought that… my dream had been fulfilled… that time…”

“…Sensei?”

“The first person… I was proud.”

What kind of dream was he seeing?

Glen murmured to no one in particular, and said things that no one could understand.

“But… by the second… I couldn’t help but think… that it was a bit strange…”

“…?”

“…By the third… I clearly… realized….”

Sistina silently listened to Glen.

“Everyone… called me… a hero… It’s true that… I saved… a lot of people… but… I’m really… not suited… for that… kind… of thing.”

After that, Glen's murmurs stopped, and he once again fell into unconsciousness.

"Sensei…?"

Sistina couldn't understand the meaning behind what Glen said. All she could do was try to guess what he meant through the bits and pieces of information. It seems that he was once part of the imperial army, and he was a magician who had an original magic that specialized in combat. On top of that, his hate for magic was overbearing, and he had a one-sided view that 'magic was a tool for murder'. Finally… his murmurs a moment ago.

"Glen-sensei… hmm?"

And so, whilst maintaining the healing magic, Sistina absentmindedly thought about the irresponsible and carefree man named Glen, who failed to be serious at any occasion.

How long have I been asleep?

There was a sound from corner of the consciousness, that rung somewhere in the pitch-black world.

It was the sharp sound that was like pieces of metal clashing against one another.

Just what kind of sound was that?

As if rising from the quagmire of memories, he realized the true identity of that sound.

Glen, whose consciousness had been fully restored in the instant, immediately jumped off the bed.

"—!? How long has it been!?"

No one answered. Looking down, he saw Sistina, who had overworked herself, sleeping soundly on the edge of the bed. The only sound that reverberated through the room was that of the sharp metal clashing against one another.

"Tch—"

I'll confirm the situation later.

Glen reached into his pocket, and took out the ringing gemstones that had received a call, and put it to his ear.

"Is it Serika?"

"—Glen!?"

He could feel the relieved voice coming from the gemstone.

"Thank god… I was worried you idiot."

The voice from the stone was a bit shaky.

"I tried contacting you countless times, but you didn't respond… so I thought something might've happened…"

"Sorry. There was of trouble, but I'm alive somehow."

"… Did you fight the enemy?"

Serika's voice seemed to harden up.

"…Ah, there have been some new developments cause of that. About one of the enemy magician… I killed him."

"… I see."

Glen ignored the seemingly apathetic voice coming from the other side, and continued.

"With this, all the enemies whom we know about have been neutralized. What's left is the magician that we haven't confirmed… and they're probably the person behind all this. I'm afraid that the student that was taken away is also with them. Any progress on your side?"

"We tried teleporting from our side, but it didn't work. As we suspected, the academy's teleportation formation was destroyed. Geez… how much time, money, reagents, and catalysts do they think is need to make even one teleportation formation. It's the property of the nation, so treat it a bit more carefully… Though, it's pointless to say such a thing to terrorists."

"… I see, that's a shame. If you were here then I'd feel reassured."

“That said, the imperial court magicians are finally moving. The Fejiti sub-division for anti-magic-terrorism is on the move, but, as of now, they’re having a lot of trouble dispelling the barrier that’s sealed the academy in. It’ll be a while before they’re able to charge in.”

“Those guys actually came? …Rather, it seems that even the imperial court magicians aren’t able to dispel it easily hmm?”

“Ah, to be honest, the instigator behind this incident’s ability in this field… as in their ability with spatial-type magic, is that of a genius that is hardly matched in history. Even I have to admit that I haven’t studied enough.”

“For real? For you to say that much…”

“Well, you should know that the magic I specialize in is in the field of combat. I can slaughter a god or two, but I’m not suited to intricate things like this. The seventh rank… it can be reached by giving everything, even your humanity, to researching magic, but limits of magic aren’t that shallow.”

Hearing Serika’s self-loathing murmurs, Glen felt distressed. ‘Should I have come to a decision sooner?’, ‘Should I have saved that charm?’ For a brief moment, Glen lost himself in thought.

However, it was true that by charging in without caring for the result, he had managed to save Sistina. If he hadn’t neutralized the two dangerous magicians quickly – especially that inhumane delinquent man – then there was no saying what would’ve happened to the fifty students that were held hostage.

What’s done is done. What matters is what I do from here on out.

Glen pulled himself together and continued to question Serika.

“About the possibility of a traitor in the academy… did you find anything?”

“Nothing. I went through the professors and lecturers one by one but there wasn’t anyone who had disappeared. All of them are confirmed as present.”

“For real…?”

“No, the possibility of a traitor still exists. For example, there are ways for one to steal the formula for the magic security system, and then collude with those guys.”

“In any case, the identity of the enemy that infiltrated this academy still can’t be confirmed.”

“…Mhm.”

My head hurts. Neither the enemy’s intention nor their identity was known. So how should I deal with this? To start with, just where is that guy hiding in this academy? This academy is large. Aside from the campus buildings, there’s also the mysterious forest, the ancient ruins, and the underground labyrinth. The day would be over before I could look through all of them.

“Damnit… What the hell is their goal!”

As Glen began to swear and shout.

“By the way, there’s one thing that’s strange about this….”

Said Serika, As though she had an idea, Serika said such.

“What is it?”

“Using the monolith-type magic calculation machine in the capital, I investigated the magic circuitry through the academy’s barrier… and I discovered something strange.”

“Something strange?”

“As of now, the barrier that seals the academy doesn’t have any function to allow people to get out. The settings of the barrier were modified so that there isn’t any method to do that.”

“Huh? How could that be possible? Those guys prepared keys to get in you know? Isn’t it a given that they also prepared keys to get out?”

“That would normally be true, but to the very end, the barrier is set so that it is impossible to get out. From a practical standpoint, it is also impossible to forcibly destroy it.”

“Then, how do these guys plan to get out after achieving their goals?”

“How should I know?”

“Don’t say that so—”

Then, a single possibility flashed through Glen’s mind.

“No, wait…”

Glen took his watch out of his pocket to check the time, but it seems that it had been damaged in the battle with the dark-coated man. The needle of the clock had stopped at 12 o’clock.

“Serika, what time is it right now?”

“Huh?”

“Just tell me. My watch is broken.”

“…Right now, it just hit 5 o clock. So why do you need it?”

In other words, I slept for about five hours. There’s something clearly unnatural about this. That dark-coated man had attacked immediately after my battle with Jhin, without giving me so much as the time to catch his breath. Although it’s possible that the enemy had lost track of us during all that, it’s unreasonable for them to have not found us by now.

“Hey Serika, is the teleportation formation really broken?”

“Hm? If it can be used, then shouldn’t it be obvious that it’s broken? Even though we activated the formation on this side, there was no response from the one over there. Also, didn’t we establish that destroying the teleportation formation would be the first thing that—”

“What if they didn’t break it, but changed the magical composition instead? If they changed the setting of the formation at the academy to not connect to the capital, but somewhere else, where they’d already made another formation in advance, instead, then—”

“Ahaha, that’s impossible you know? Teleportation formations are crafted to solely teleport to a specific location. Destroying it is one thing, but to change the complete structure of a teleport formation in order to alter the settings is something that even I wouldn’t—”

“What if it was the person who took control of the academy’s barrier? He’s a genius of spatial-type magic that even impressed you right? If it was that guy, would it still be impossible?”

Hearing Glen’s question, Serika was momentarily at a loss for words.

“No, how could that… that’s impossible… but… if it was that guy, then…”

“Serika, if you were that guy, and you could use any methods that you pleased, how long would it take to change the settings of that formation? A rough approximation is fine.”

“Mm-, if the required knowledge was studied beforehand, and the tools and reagents were all prepared in advance… then, assuming I had the same skill as that person it would take about… five… no, six… hours?”

“—That’s decided then!”

“Ah, oi!? What’s dec—”

Glen forcibly cut the connection, and return the gemstone to his pocket. Then, he found ‘the fool’s’ card at his bedside, took it, and jumped off the bed.

Checking the condition of his body, he could feel the pain of pulling against his closing wounds, but it was enough for him to move. If he were to move vigorously, then his closed wounds would probably reopen. However, he could only be thankful that he had recovered to this extent.

“Thanks, Sistina. It’s good that you were here.”

Glen ruffled Sistina’s hair, and rushed out of the medical room.

“They probably followed this kind of scenario.”

Pondering such, Glen dashed as quickly as he could through the academy grounds.

Although his wounds reopened with each step, and he began to bleed again, he paid it no mind.

“First, the person behind the scenes snuck into the academy the day before, and found somewhere to hide, most likely in the underground maze. Then, last night, Serika and the other professors left for the capital using the teleportation formation. After that, the person began to make their move, and spent the entire night messing with the academy’s barrier.”

Glen turned the corner, and the courtyard of the academy came into view.

“Next is changing of the teleportation formation’s settings. Since it would take a lot of expensive reagents and special tools to do that. It was probably impossible to move those in the day prior, as bringing in such specialized equipment would probably draw the notice of the academy’s staff. That’s why, they were probably brought in by the dark-coated man and the delinquent today. Following the plan, the two of them would imprison the students and secure Lumia, and at the same time, the person behind the scenes would start altering the teleportation formation.”

Breaking through the courtyard, Glen charged through the forest path and set his sight on his destination.

“However, the person behind the scenes made a miscalculation, and that would be that I would suddenly defeat his three co-conspirators. That guy put his full attention into changing the formation. So the reason why they didn’t come pursue me in the few hours that I was incapacitated… was because they didn’t have the time on their hands to do so. If they could complete the formation, then they would be able to take Lumia and retreat. So by the time the people outside unsealed the barrier, they would already be long gone. No… this bout is a lot more one-sided than that. If they detonated an explosion crystal after they left and blew the gathered hostages to smithereens, their pursuers would be forced to spend a lot of time identifying the corpses, and it would make pursuing Lumia even harder. Those guys are the kind of people who would to do that, aren’t they?”

Basically, this was an abduction that targeted Lumia specifically.

If they made it seem like a terrorist bombing, then they would be able to brilliantly mislead the public eye.

“But it’s too soon to make any conclusions. There are two inconsistencies with this scenario.”

The first is Lumia. If all they wanted to do was abduct her then they wouldn’t have to go through this roundabout way. They could just do it normally. Maybe they were wary of being tracked, but this is overkill. So the real reason they’re after Lumia is still a mystery.

Second, is regarding the traitor from the academy. In order for this plan to

work, there has to be a traitor. It wouldn't work if someone was merely conspiring with that group, as otherwise, they wouldn't be able to clear the initial condition of 'infiltrating the academy'. However, Serika said that there doesn't seem to be any traitors."

"Maybe I'm rushing too much…"

He couldn't help but feel he had made a wrong judgement. However, the most likely place for there to be a teleportation formation – was the teleportation tower. That was reason enough to go confirm.

Then, Glen's thoughts were abruptly confirmed.

As the dignified appearance of the pure-white tower came into view, he saw a countless number of golems lined up unnaturally on the final section of the forest path.

The golems were humanized giants that looked as though they were a pile of rocks.

They were the guardian golems that protected the academy. These golems were usually simple stones on the roadside that became part of the academy's scenery, and would automatically form and compose itself in an abnormal situation in order to intercept any intruders — That was the kind of system that they functioned under.

The fact that the golems, who originally had that sole purpose, were unnaturally gathered to defend the tower, means that—

"Yeah, bingo! However… it's always like this in the end isn't it…"

Glen wanted to cry.

In any case, the golems seemed hard to deal with. Noticing Glen getting closer, the golems prepared themselves to intercept him. As if it was a given, all the golems allied themselves with the enemy. Such is what it means to fully grasp the academy's internal security system.

"Hey, I thought this was gonna happen you know!? Move aside you mobs-!"

Steeling his resolve Glen charged towards the mobs and began to chant.

"<Oh Crimson Lion · With a torrent of rage · Roar and infuriate>–!"

The first to strike has the upper hand.

The black magic [Blaze · Burst].

Glen threw the fireball that formed in his left hand at the golems.

The fireball that moved swiftly in a curved arc – landed a direct hit.

Accompanied by an explosion sound, the fireball that struck the center burst into wildfire and created an intense gale.

The golem that was pulverized to dust, but—

"Daah—! These guys are tougher than I thought!? And they're hella heavy as well!? Ah, this is so troublesome-!"

All of the surrounding golems were only slightly burnt on the surface. None of them had lost their balance despite the intense gale that erupted from the explosion.

Although a direct hit would defeat one, originally, [Blaze · Burst] was a magic that had low restrictions for distance. As a result, it was a spell that – proportional to its force – used a large amount of magic power.

If he used [Blaze · Burst] on each and every one of these golems, Glen magic power reserves would probably dry up first.

"Oi oi, what should I do now!? Hey, what should I do, Glen!? R-, Right, if [Blaze · Burst] wouldn't work then I could use [Lightning · Pierce] to pierce through them— As if a tiny holy like that would do anything, am I an idiot!? Then I should just use my super sure-kill [Extinction · Ray] to — As if I could!? I've already used the catalyst, and I don't have enough magic power to use it-! Ah geez, what should I dooo—!?"

Glen, who started to panic slightly due to his impatience, shouted to himself as he continued to charge towards the golems.

The distance between him and the golems closed little by little.

"Calm down… think… I need to think. Calm down and think. There has to be a magic that would allow me to break through this situation… Calm down… think… pfft, as if I have the time to think right now—!"

By the time he realized it, he was face to face with the golems.

The golems, that boasted a body 2-3 times the size of that of a human, were within striking distance of Glen.

The golems turned their eyes down towards Glen, raised their fists in unison — and swung down towards Glen.

Fatal and powerful attacks, a single of which had enough power to pulverize Glen into dust, rained upon him.

“Gyaaaaa-! Ah I don’t know anymore! I’ll just break my way through somehow!”

As he created out, Glen dodged the fists that came from above, and jumped to the side to dodge the swing of another arm from the front, and slid across the floor to avoid another attack from his flank.

There was no time for petty tricks.

As the gust caused by the heavy strikes pushed against him, Glen nimbly navigated through the gaps between the golems.

The only things moving Glen’s body were his trained sense of intuition and his controlled breathing.

Crash, crash, crash—

The crushing sound of the stone fists striking the ground resounded through the academy.

The pavement was turned inside out and formed pillars of dirt. Countless craters were formed on the grounds of the academy.

The stone slabs and gravel that were sent flying under the force of the strikes, relentlessly struck Glen from all directions.

One of the stone fists would occasionally graze against Glen’s body and shatter his bones.

Glen’s body was riddled with blood and dirt – yet he ceased to stop for a single moment.

Facing the army of golems that came crashing like a tsunami, Glen – as though

he was treading on a tightrope – danced through the gaps between the golems and continued to break through.

“Daaaaaaaaaaaaah–!”

The entrance to the tower was right before him.

However, the distance seemed to stretch for an eternity.

And then—

“Ah-, geez. After this I’m definitely asking the academy for work injury damages, goddamnit…”

Accompanying the clicking and clacking of his feet against the floor, Glen climbed the seemingly endless spiral staircase of the teleportation tower.

And at this crucial moment, his body refused to listen to his demands.

“Damnit… why did this have to happen to me… this is why I don’t like working… After this, I’m gonna go back to being a shut-in NEET… and live by leeching off Serika…”

If he didn’t continue to spout these idle complaints, his consciousness might fade at any moment.

By some miracle, Glen had managed to break through the defenses of the golems, and successfully infiltrate the teleportation tower.

However not only did his old wounds reopen, his body was also riddled with new bruises and wounds. The flowing blood slid down the stone walls of the tower to create a scarlet-colored line.

Finally, Glen arrived at the end of the dim, spiral staircase.

Before him was the lobby of the highest floor — the room where the teleportation formation was.

“Don’t move-!”

Glen kicked open the door. The inside of the room was dimly lit.

“I have arrived! Oi, you’re here right? Stop messing around and let’s bring an

end to all of this.”

“…Sensei!? That voice is sensei!”

Lumia voice could be heard from a dark corner of the room.

“T-, Thank god… So you’re safe!”

“If you think this is ‘safe’ then you need to go see a doctor…”

With a retort, Glen strutted into the room.

And his eyes gradually become acquainted with the darkness.

Finally, from the darkness, emerged a delicate-looking man who looked as though he was in his mid-twenties. It was a handsome young man with smooth hair, a refreshing and cleanly face, and dark blue eyes.

I don’t recognize him. In my short time here as a temporary instructor at this academy, I don’t remember seeing this guy even once. So it seems like there aren’t any traitors in the academy, not that it manners now though.

“So you are the person behind all this?”

“Mhm, that is correct.”

The young man returned an unfazed reply.

“…I do say, it’s a sin to have that kind of pretty face, and you’re going to add a couple more on top of that? … Even the kind and charitable Glen-sensei wouldn’t take this standing up you know? For your punishment, I’ll have you eat my fist. Prepare yourself.”

“Hahaha, as a fellow educator, I have to say that it is unadvisable to enact physical punishment.”

Glen confirmed the surroundings of the young man. As for pre-activated object such as magic tools — There wasn’t a single one to be seen.

The young man didn’t seem to have any plans. All he did was stand in place and glare at Glen.

The first to strike wins, such was Glen’s judgment. He took out ‘the fool’ without hesitation.

“—It’s decided.”

Although it was anticlimactic, but he confirmed that his original magic [The Fool’s World] was activated. As a result, regardless of what kind of special technique this man had in store, it would all be futile. It won’t be able to activate.

“Shame for you, but it’s my w—”

“—I have won.”

However, the young man announced his victory first.

“What?”

“Is this a practical joke by the gods? To think that, in the end, it would become this kind of game.”

“Oi, what is that supposed to mean?”

“To be honest, I am not a magician that is suited to battle. Originally, I wouldn’t be able to win against you no matter what. However, it is because you activated [The Fool’s World], that victory is in my grasp.”

“Stop messing around and answer me! What the heck do you…”

Now that his eyes had fully adjusted, he was able to grasp the situation of the room.

Lumia was behind the young man. She was trapped on the magic formation using magic, and her ability to use magic was sealed. The formation she was on was the teleportation formation, which settings had already been modified, and activated. It seems like the formation had a time restriction placed upon it. Once the indicated time any existence that was on top of it would be teleported to its preset destination. The shining rune-letters on the formation relentless moved towards zero.

This is fine. It’s still within the range of my expectations.

The problem is was the young man. At his feet was a magic formation similar to the one that Lumia was on. However, for some reason, the magic power circuit — a line of light, traveled across the ground and connected the two formations. And then, after grasping the identity of the formation by reading the

language, Glen was stunned. The formation was— “The white magic ritual [Sacrifice] — the soul-exchange ritual?”

“Yes.”

The young man showed a calm smile.

“In a short while, Lumia-san will be transported to my colleagues through the teleportation formation. That acts as a fuse for activating this formation, which is tied with my soul. By consuming my soul, the formation will mold a large amount of magic power — that will destroy the entirety of this academy through an explosion. Since my soul as a high affinity for magic, it will undoubtedly display that kind of force.”

“Wh—”

“Yes, I am a bomb.”

“W-, What do you think you’re doing, you bastard—!?”

Towards the young man who said that as though it was a given, Glen couldn’t help but shudder.

“Did you plan to die from the start!?”

“Yes, that is the meaning of my existence after all.”

Then, Lumia painfully cried.

“Please… stop this already! Huey-sensei!”

“Huey?”

It was a name that he heard before.

“If I remember correctly, you are my predecessor… the one that went missing…. Ah, so that’s what happened!”

“Why do you have to do this, Huey-sensei! You were such a respectable teacher! Even though you’re not the type of person to do this…-!”

“Sorry, Lumia-san. It’s a shame, but I was originally this kind of person.”

Seemingly ashamed, Huey lowered his gaze and said.

“Should a member of royalty or a relative of a government authority attend

this academy, my task is to kill them in a suicidal act of terror. For that purpose, a human bomb was placed here as an associate of the academy over ten years ago. That is me.”

“You’re kidding… You prepared to target someone whose entry to the academy couldn’t be confirmed?”

“Mhm, that is the case.”

“Tch… That’s right, you guys are the Wisdom of the Heavens Research Society… a group of idiots that would seriously do this kind of thing.”

Glen loathsomely said this.

“You are correct. If Lumia-san had not attended this academy, then I would continue to freely continue my life as an instructor. So it’s truly a shame that my organization set their eyes on her.”

“So what? Is Lumia actually the lady of some esteemed family?”

“Sensei… uhm…”

“It’s fine. You don’t need to say anything. I’m not interested after all. You’re just you.”

Lumia, who was about to bitterly say something, was stopped by Glen.

“However, isn’t this a tad strange? You guys are trying to abduct Lumia now right? Wasn’t your original goal to ‘kill’?”

“Mhm, that is true, but Lumia-san’s circumstances and unique characteristic are a bit special. The higher-ups of my organization have a great interest in Lumia-san. That’s why the plan was changed at the last moment, and that is also why this plan feels rather sloppy and understaffed. The extra condition of ‘destroying the academy’ is merely because it would cause great damage to the imperial government in the long term. Now then, that is enough explanation. Let us begin our main topic, shall we?”

The young man — Huey, as if testing Glen, looked him straight in the eye.

“If the teleportation formation trapping Lumia-san is dispelled, then my self-destruct formation will not activate either. In other words, this is a game of whether or not you can dispel the teleportation formation within the given time.

By the way, you've most likely noticed this already, but killing me wouldn't do either. If you kill me, then both of these formations will activate automatically."

"… As if I would fall for that kind beginner-level magic trap."

"If you didn't use [The Fool's World], then you would have been able to dispel the Lumia-san's formation with time to spare. However, you used [The Fool's World]. During its effective period, you wouldn't be able to work on dispelling the formation. In the end, you may only begin after [The Fool's World]'s effects end… It's quite a large loss of time."

Glen had realized that he had had made a large miscalculation. That's why all he could do was reaffirm the rules.

"I don't know your proficiency will dispelling magic, nor do I know how long the effective period of your [The Fool's World] is. However… there are about ten minutes before the teleportation formation activates. Even with my experience, if I began dispelling it now, I would barely have time to spare…"

"……."

"You are at a crossroad. Knowing that you don't have enough time, you can try to save Lumia-san and the other students and die in the ensuing explosion together. Or you could forsake everything and run away. There is a large labyrinth beneath the academy, and running there would yield a large chance to survive the explosion… if it was only you that is."

It was true that, even if he left immediately to bring the hostage students and Sistina to the underground labyrinth, there wouldn't be enough time. If he wanted to be saved, then he would have to forsake them and run straight for the labyrinth on his own. However, this option never even crossed his mind.

Glen raised his eyebrow and closed his eyes. Ignoring the sweat the trickled from his body, he continued to stay solemnly silent. It was extremely vexing that his own original magic [The Fool's World] was eating up the time, second by second.

"Sensei… please run."

Lumia pleaded to Glen.

“If everyone’s going to die… then at the very least, you alone should…”

“……”

Glen continued to stay silent. The room was silent enough that one could feel the heartbeat of its occupants.

“Sensei… please… I’m begging you….”

Regardless of what Lumia said, Glen ceased to move.

Then.

The few minutes passed as though it was an eternity.

At a certain moment, Glen suddenly opened in eyes.

It was when the effect of [The Fool’s World] ended.

Glen immediately bit his right thumb, and dashed to the teleportation formation, where Lumia sat.

“Not as single trace of hesitation. How admirable.”

Ignoring Huey’s words of praise, Glen looked closely at the formation before him. Lumia was trapped in a five-layered circular formation. If he couldn’t break through all of them, then Lumia wouldn’t be saved. An enormous amount of magic power flowed through the formation, and it was also equipped with magic amplification circuits. As a result, it was impossible to dispel it by counterbalancing the magic power using his own through [Dispel · Force].

In the end, the only way to dispel this is to destroy the composition of the magic itself.

“<Oh the power of the beginning · Through the flow of my blood · Create a path>!”

He chanted the spell for the black magic [Blood · Catalyze]. By treating his dripping blood with magic power, he created a simple magical catalyst. Since Glen couldn’t perform high-level control that used magic power itself to write words, he had no choice but to use his own blood to write the dispel formation directly on top of the outer layer of the teleportation formation.

He shook his arm to cause blood to flow, and allowed it to trail down his hand

and to his fingers. Using all five fingers, he furiously continued to write.

“How fast. Did you already form a route and mental image of how to dispel this in the few minutes leading until now?”

Huey, impressed by Glen’s hand movements, murmured to himself.

Lumia, seeing Glen, who continued to work on dispelling the formation in a bloodcurdling display, desperately protested.

“Sensei, no! Run! There isn’t any time!”

“Shut up and be quiet!”

However, Glen refused Lumia’s protests, and continued to write with his blood.

Then.

“<End oh heaven’s chains · With a basis of silence · The constraints of reason shall be released>!”

Using what was left of his magic power, Glen activated the dispelling black magic ritual [Erase]. Accompanying a metallic sound and a gust of wind, the outer, first, layer was destroyed into particles of light.

Next is the second layer. I’ve spent about one minute to get this far—

“Sensei! I’m begging you, please leave me and run away!”

“Don’t be selfish you idiot!”

Taking a step forward, Glen roared out as he moved onto the second layer.

“You’re not the only one! That white cat girl and the other students… there are still a lot of people at the academy! How could I leave all that behind and run away!?”

Seeing the second layer, Glen stopped his finger and grit his teeth.

“You bastard, the formation is clearly more complicated…”

Basically, it meant that the formation would become more complicated as he progressed further, and the difficulty of dispelling it would rise proportionally.

“Huey was it? I’ll be sure to hit you hard after all of this is over.”

“I understand. Then I will prepare myself for it.”

Despite his abusive language, Glen continued to tirelessly move his fingers.

“You can’t, sensei… At this rate, sensei will… sensei will-!”

Lumia looked toward Glen, who worked on dispelling the formation with undivided attention. He appeared to be suffering intensely from mana deficiency sickness. No life or warmth could be felt from the color of his skin. He was already at the brink of death.

“If you use anymore magic, you will die!”

“Ah, then white cat will be really happy won’’t she.”

“No… Why…? No one will blame you even if you run away you know…? You didn’t do anything wrong…”

“Ah-, geez, just shut up!! Stop distracting me and stay quiet!”

“Why? Why would you go this far? To the point where you stake your life…”

Did he remember something from Lumia’s question?

Glen continued to work, but he remained silent.

“… I remember.”

“Eh?”

“Until I had that strange dream just now, I forgot it all. The reason why I looked up to magic!”

Marking that the last words, Glen once again chanted [Erase].

The second layer was successfully dispelled. The shattered fragments from the broken formation scattered into the air.

Glen took another step, moved towards the third layer… and threw up blood.

“—S-, Sensei!?”

Lumia cried out.

Glen ignored this, and continued to work with shaking hands.

“Ge-ho… it’s nothing noteworthy, just some childish thing! With the flying

castle in the sky as the stage, the magician of justice defeats the demon king, and saves the princess… There was a children's picture book similar to this right!? The reason I learned magic was because I really, really looked up to that magician of justice you know!?"

"… Picture book? That… could it be, 'The Magician of Melgarius'…?"

Glen's lips curved distortedly.

"Haha-! Isn't it really dumb!? Ah, I was really dumb! How many years of my life have I pointlessly wasted for a dreamy kid's story like that!? I really wasted it all away!"

Glen seemed like he would spit blood at such thoughts. Whilst actually spitting blood, Glen confessed everything.

"Geho-… guh-… But in the end, I just can't give it up! My dreams have long since shattered! The magician of justice in the picture book is a huge lie! In reality, the world of magic is layered in blood! Despite that, I still can't give up! No matter how much time passes, I still can't give up on this worthless fantasy of being a magician of justice!"

Glen stared at the formation before his eyes in disgust.

"What kind of magician of justice would I be if I couldn't save anybody!? If I run away now… just what is my life supposed to mean!? To give my life to being a magician of justice… I know it's pointless! But I just don't want to all be worthless!"

"S-, Sensei…"

"So stay shut! I'm not doing this for you, nor am I doing this for the students! I'm selfishly doing this for myself and only myself! Do you have any complaints goddamnit!"

Make it. Make it. Make it. Glen desperately suppressed his impatience, calmly drew the dispelling formation, used the magic power in his entire body to cast [Erase]— The third layer was successfully dispelled.

I did it. Glen's spirits were uplifted by this result, and he was progressing at a better pace than he expected.

He didn’t believe that he would be able to get this far in the eleventh hour.

There were two layers left. Glen triumphantly moved onto the fourth—

Then, it suddenly came. Because it had been going so well, he had failed to notice.

Glen felt something in his body splitting apart.

“Gobo–!?”

In the next moment, Glen threw up a large amount of blood at once.

“Gyaa-!? S-, Sensei!?”

Seeing Glen collapse to the floor, Lumia cried out.

“…a….Ah? Guh….a….Goho, Gaha-!?”

His body won’t move. His fingers won’t move. His strength quickly left his body, and his consciousness began to quickly fade. His concentration had already shattered — Even if wanted to continue dispelling the formation, no solutions would come to his mind. What he was doing, what he should do. All of this became estranged in his mind as though it was veiled by a fog.

What happened? To think that he would be the one whose time limit reached first.

Thinking about it, he had long since exceeded the limit. How many times had he pushed himself to do things that would surely chip away at his lifespan?

And once he realized this, it was all over. His couldn’t move a single finger.

It was the end— Glen had clearly grasped that. There was no way he could catch up in this condition.

“I… really… couldn’t do it huh. Hahaha… I see… I guess… that’s right huh…”

Despair equivalent to that of when he realized the true nature of the magic world, took ahold of Glen’s heart.

“…Sorry… Lumi…a…”

He believed that he wouldn’t be able to do anything more. He understood that he wouldn’t be able to save anyone.

Despite that, he didn’t give up.

Regardless of past or present, it didn’t change.

No matter how unsightly, no matter how futile, in the end, the only thing he couldn’t bring himself to do was to give up.

This was no longer beliefs nor righteousness. It was simply Glen’s stubbornness.

That’s why, Glen, whose near-dead was pushed by his unshattered will, desperately crawled towards the fourth layer… It was then.

“…Caught you.”

Lumia’s outstretched hands barely touched Glen’s cheeks.

“Because you didn’t give up sensei… I was able to catch you.”

“…Lumia…?”

“Sensei… please take this.”

It was in that moment.

Suddenly, Lumia’s began to shine, and the place where she touched began to heat—

“Wh—!?”

The gentle breeze swayed her glowing hair, and the surroundings were filled with particles of light.

Her gentle smile guided towards Glen made her seem like an angel—

Then, in the next moment.

With a ‘don’ sound, Glen’s body flowed with an enormous amount of magic power.

The pain that dominated his body a moment earlier disappeared as though it were a lie, and his senses seemed to sharpen. He had never experience such a thing before. His body heated up, as though he were engulfed by a flame.

Then, from that heat, came an overwhelming feeling of omnipotence—

“This, is…?”

His mind and body were restored. His body whose line had been cut, began to move again. He couldn’t feel any magic being used by Lumia. In the first place, her ability to use magic was sealed.

If that’s the case, the there was only one possibility for this miracle.

Supernaturals. In extremely rare cases, there were people who possessed special powers that could give birth to miracles without relying on the power of magic. However, they were believed to be the reincarnation of the devil, and were the victims of such a mindless belief even today. There were even fanatical groups that existed for the sake of hunting them down.

“Lumia… you, could it be… that you’re… a supernatural!?”

Furthermore, he had heard of a rumor about this power before. With direct contact with their target, they would be able to use their will to amplify their magic power by ten or more times. The world’s strongest living magic amplification circuits.

Emotion Amplifiers.

People who possessed extraordinary powers that alone could overwhelm a complicated magic ritual that took tens or hundreds of steps—

“O, OOOOOOOOOHHH—!”

Glen forcefully pulled back his faded consciousness, furiously berated his previously downtrodden heart, and returned to dispel the formation. At a speed that left himself at awe, he completed the structure of the dispel-formation, and chanted the magic for [Erase]. As if it was a given, the fourth layer was successfully dispelled.

Then, the teleportation began to shine, and began make sounds that foretold its activation. The transfer sequence began.

“S-, Sensei…”

“Damn, damndamndamn! Make it!”

I don’t even care if I die after this—

Using magic power to the extent of wearing out his brain and organs, moving his finger to the extent of crushing his muscles, allowing his blood to flow as though he were trying to dry out his body, Glen entered the final spurt— “Make it in timeeeeeeeeee—!”

After completing the final word, Glen immediately began to shout—

“<End oh heaven’s chains · With a basis of silence · The constraints of reason shall be released>!””

……

……

…..Then, silence.

Light, wind, sound, all of them disappeared like a heinous mirage.

The time indicated on the teleportation formation had reached zero.

At the same time — the formation was completely dispelled.

“Sensei…”

Lumia — was here.

“Haa—Haa—Haa—Haa—……”

In the silence that signaled the end of everything, only Glen’s strained breaths could be heard.

“…Is this, my loss?”

Breaking the silence, Huey released a short sigh.

“How strange. Even though the plan failed… I can’t help but feel relieved.

“…Hmpf. So you were scared of dying?”

“No, there is that, but… I suppose that I’m happy that the students came out unscathed. That’s what I think.”

“And? Is there… anything else you want to say?”

“… Just one.”

“What is it?”

At Glen’s urging, Huey voiced his inner problems.

“What exactly should I have done? Should I have died like the organization command me to… Or should I die after defying the organization? Even at this juncture, I still cannot find an answer.”

“How should I know? Isn’t it your fault for not choosing your own path and following what the organization told you to do?”

“To choose… my own path? Is that so?”

“What I mean is that you should clean after your own messes you bastard. Although I sympathize with your circumstance… Don’t blame everything that you’ve done on the organization.”

“… How cruel. But… well… I suppose that it is as you say. It would be great if I had met you sooner. Right now, I can’t help but feel somewhat empowered.”

“Is that right? Well, clench your teeth alright?”

Glen swung his arm forward and relentlessly struck Huey’s cheek.

The force was enough to send Huey flying. He rolled across the floor several times, and fainted.

“… My oh my.”

Then, with a shaky, floaty feeling, Glen’s vision began to fall towards the ground.

With that sight as his last, Glen’s consciousness faded.

……

……

“Your dreams aren’t pointless you know?”

Lying down in the pitch-black darkness, he heard someone’s voice.

I don’t really know.

“It’s true that… your dream may have come in a different scene and form than you yearned for, but I’m sure that your dream has saved a lot of people.”

I don’t even know whose voice this is.

But it feels like someone I know.

“I am one of the many that you’ve saved. Although I feel quite lonely… it can’t be helped that you don’t remember me. However, I… three years ago, from the moment we met… have adored you.”

Something is getting close to my face. I can smell a sweet fragrance.

I feel a soft warmth and gentle touch against my forehead… I think.

As I thought. I don’t get it. I don’t remember.

“Sensei… thank you.”

……

……

Final Chapter: The Reason I became a Magical Instructor, even though I'm Unemployed

Alzano Imperial Magic Academy's attempted suicide bombing incident—

Due to the efforts of a single temporary magic instructor, the worst-case scenario had been avoided. As a certain enemy organization had been involved, the entire incident had been quickly covered up in order to prevent public unrest, and the infrastructure damage caused to the academy had been publicly announced to be a result of a failed magic experiment.

On the other hand, the imperial court magicians had used the resources at their disposal to control the flow of information, and as a result, only a select group of instructors and professors, as well as the parties involved, knew about the incident.

Of course, not everything could be kept in the dark.

'The incident involved a legendary magician-killer who once acted behind the scenes as a personal sword of the empress, an abandoned princess that was said to be the reincarnation of the devil and who should have already been erased from existence, as well as the soul of a supposedly dead instructor'… Such rumors – the origin of which was unknown – had spread throughout the academy. However, humans were creatures that would eventually get tired of something, and so, the rumors faded away after a month.

One of the students involved, Lumia Tinzel, had taken a leave of absence for unknown reasons. However, she returned to the academy after a short while. If one took to the streets early in the morning, they would see her cheerfully walking to school together with a silver-haired girl.

In the end, nothing had changed about the academy, and the peaceful and monotonous days returned.

Then—

But, well, I didn't think that Lumia was Princess Alumiania, who had supposedly died three-years ago from a disease…

On a clear day, after lunch.

As Alzano Imperial Magic Academy's – no longer temporary – Instructor Glen walked along the corridors of the academy, he recalled the incident from a month ago.

After that incident, Glen and Sistina, as the two credited with resolving the incident, were secretly summoned for an audience with the higher-echelon of the imperial government, where they were informed of Lumia's true identity. As a result of various politics surrounding Lumia, who was a supernatural, she had been exiled from the royal family. Furthermore, for the sake of the empire's future, there was no other choice but to keep Lumia's identity a secret. Thus, Glen and Sistina, who knew about the situation, were asked to cooperate in order to keep Lumia's secret hidden.

Geez… they're just giving me more troublesome things to deal with…

That being said, nothing really changed. Regardless of whether she's a princess or a supernatural, Lumia is just Lumia. As for Sistina, even though she learned about Lumia's true identity, her attitude towards Lumia didn't change in the slightest. Even now, the two of them are getting along just as they did before.

But, well, I suppose it is what it is huh.

<TL Note: proverb なる様になる. It's what it is/let nature take its course.>

Everything had returned to normal. As Glen was considering such things in a carefree manner—

"However, this is certainly quite surprising."

A voice suddenly came from behind him.

“I thought that after that incident, you wouldn’t draw any ties with magic ever again.”

Glen turned around in response.

There stood Serika, who seemed to be in a good mood.

“Huh? What’s that supposed to mean? Are you saying that you wouldn’t mind me leeching off you?”

Glen replied in an annoyed manner.

“Haha, don’t get ahead of yourself, idiot.”

Despite her harsh tone, Serika showed a happy yet lonely expression.

“But really, just what has come over you? It was beyond my wildest imagination for you yourself to say that you want to become an instructor…. After all, ‘that’ had happened not too long ago.

Serika looked at Glen’s robe, which bore the mark of an owl, the symbol of an official instructor of this academy. Neither of his arms were in the sleeves of the robe. Although such a messy way of wearing it was quite becoming of Glen, that in itself was a problem.

In response to Serika’s question, Glen shook his head in a slightly apologetic manner.

“The person from that incident… Huey, was it? I don’t think that his problem is really all that different from mine. Going along with the circumstances, blaming everything on the circumstances, and never once stopping to think about what we could do about it… Well, in any case, I don’t want to blame all of the failures in my life on magic, and perhaps I should live whilst looking to the future a little bit you know?”

“…Hmm?”

“Also…”

As Glen was about to say something—

“Ah, sensei!”

“… Geez, sensei-!”

Spotting Glen, the two familiar female students ran down the corridor towards him.

Glen glanced at the two with a wry smile, spread his arms apart, and shrugged his shoulders.

"… I want to see it. I want to see what they'll do in the future, and that in itself is enough of a reason for me to continue being a magical instructor. Well, isn't it a good way to kill time as well?"

Hearing that, Serika showed a warm smile that was akin to a mother looking after her child.

"I see. Then work hard alright?"

"… Only if I feel like it."

The two exchanged a brief smile.

And then, the silver-haired girl – Sistina – interjected at this moment.

"Hey sensei! I need to have a word with you right now!"

"What is it, white cat? You're gonna lecture me again…? You just don't get tired of this do you…? Hey, could it be that you're interested in lecturing others? … Like I said, you'll grow more white hair if you keep this up."

"Like I said, this isn't white but silver hair! Ah geez! That aside, about the alchemy class just now, what was that!? What exactly were you thinking sensei!?"

"Uh-huh? Are you talking about how we used transformation techniques on the arrangement of lower-level elements to create a method to 'convert something into something else that looks a lot like gold'? Were there any steps that I didn't clearly explain?"

"That's not it! The problem is after that!"

"Ah, are you talking about the method to 'sell the mock-gold to stupid, immoral merchants'? There aren't any problems with that method you know? To be honest, when I was still a student, I used this method to get some extra change…"

“That—is—wrong! It’s wrong in a different sense, but, either way, it’s wrong! It’s a big problem! I mean, isn’t this a crime!? It practically a direct challenge to everything that the 23rd line of the magician’s code stands for! How could you teach this to your students!?”

“You idiot. Just what’s the problem with that? ‘To make gold from nothing’… and practically speaking, ‘to change a pebble on the roadside into a gold coin’… Isn’t that truly the essence of ‘alchemy’?”

<TL Note: Glen is making a play on words. When read literally, the kanji for alchemy 錬金術, means to ‘technique to refine gold’.>

“Well, that might be true, but that’s not the problem! Ahhhh, come on already-!”

Then, the blonde haired girl – Lumia – as if to cover for Glen, spoke up.

“We-well Sisti, I’m sure that sensei was just joking around so that everyone could have more fun with the class… is that right? Sensei.”

“……Eh? Ah, mhm, yep, that’s right.”

“What’s that unnatural pause supposed to mean?”

“Mm… As I thought, Lumia really does understand me well… Sensei is really happy you know…-!”

Glen elegantly ignored Sistina’s remarks, and forced tears of gratitude to his eyes.

“Ah, speaking of which. Lumia, thanks for helping me organize the tools after our alchemy lab earlier. You really helped me out there.”

“Ehehe, you’re welcome.”

Glen patted Lumia’s head as if praising her.

And Lumia wholeheartedly accepted that.

Seeing the two, Sistina clenched her fists, and her shoulders trembled in disdain. If one looked closely enough, they could see the veins popping across her forehead.

“Ah-ah, if only white cat could be as cute as Lumia—”

“That’s not the case, sensei. Sisti also has cute sides to her you know? Actually, right now, in order to thank sensei for saving her during that time, she is— mmpf”

“Waah!? Hey, stop! Stop! “

Sistina’s face flushed red for some reason, and she hurriedly moved to block Lumia’s mouth.

“Why are you telling that to this guy!?”

“Ahaha, I mean Sisti, if I leave this be, your plan will never work because you’re too embarrassed to do it. Even though mother went through all that trouble to teach and practice with you…”

Lumia stuck out her tongue a little, and showed a mischievous smile.

“N-, No… T-, That’s not why I did that… Uhm, I just felt that it’s a necessary skill as a girl… Uhm…uu….”

Sistina stared blankly into the distance, and began to twirl her long hair around her finger. It seems that she had cut her finger recently, as it was wrapped in bandages.

“…I have no idea what you’re planning, but my judgment of you hasn’t change in the slightest alright? Lumia is cute, and you’re cheeky. That is all.”

Pu-Tch—

Towards Glen’s indelicate announcement, Sistina finally snapped.

“This is a different topic, but my father is a bureaucrat in the ministry of magic, and is the magical inspector in charge of the flow of all magic-related goods in the Fejiti branch.”

“Huh? What’s this all of a sudden?”

“By the way, sensei, do you know that there are about ten years’ worth of gold transaction records?”

“…Eh? Is that so?”

“Well, I might ask my father to thoroughly investigate fraudulent gold transactions that fall under certain conditions, you see?”

Sistina showed a bright smile. On the other hand, sweat began to form on Glen's forehead."

"Eh? No, ah… Uhm… Hey… I'm sorry, please forgive me…"

"Hmpf!"

Sistina flicked Glen's hand that clung to her aside, and turned to leave.

"Let's go, Lumia!"

"Hey… waiiiit!? Plesae waaaiitttt—!? I give you my apologies! I'm super sorry! I just got carried away for a moment—!"

"Be quiet, you idiot! Just stay put in prison and enjoy the terrible food while you're at it-!"

"Noooooooo—!"

The corridor became noisy.

Recently, this had become an event that routinely occurred. So much that it was deemed to be one of the many scenic views of the academy itself.

"My my, what a noisy bunch… It must be nice to be young.

Somewhat surprised, but bearing a wry smile nonetheless, Serika observed the situation unfold.

"… You're already fine. Well, I suppose it does feel a bit lonely."

Despite seeing the pathetic appearance of her loved disciple, who prostrated himself in front of a student, Serika murmured to herself in a satisfied manner, and gazed out the window.

Under the clear blue skies—

Was the ever-present castle that shined with the dazzling sunlight—

———.

———————.

"Does everyone know of the fairy tale called 'The Magician of Melgarius'?"

A lady suddenly murmured to no one in particular.

“Mhm, I suppose. With the floating castle as the grand stage, the magician of justice defeated the evil demon lord, and saved the princess… that is just a story for children. The people of this nation has likely heard it once or twice as a child’s lullaby right?”

With a light thud, the lady closed the book in her hands.

It was titled ‘The Magician of Melgarius’.

“But, there are a few slightly amusing anecdotes surrounding this story. For example—”

The lady turned her eyes to the map of the world on the wall in front of her.

“The neighboring country, the Rezalia kingdom. The ones that rule the kingdom, the Holy Elizareth Church… has designated ‘The Magician of Melgarius’ as a forbidden text, and has burned all known copies of it. It has also been said that its author has been labeled a heretic, and was burned at the stake as punishment.

The lady wistfully sighed.

“It’s quite strange isn’t it…? Although it’s just a children’s tale, it has provoked such a strong reaction from an entire nation”

The lady silently walked to the balcony of her room.

“Another strange part about this is that… In this nation, there were once a great amount of magicians who devoted themselves to research in order to unlock the mysteries of this grand stage – that is, the castle floating in the skies of Fejiti – but… one day, many of them mysteriously disappeared without a trace, or died unnatural deaths. Of course, not all the magicians met such a fate, however… it’s quite unnatural from a statistical perspective. Was this result… just mere coincidence?”

Under the clear skies, the gentle breeze swayed the lady’s long hair.

From the balcony, she could see the entirety of Alzano Empire’s capital, Orlando’s streets—

And in the far, far distance—

She could see the miniscule visage of the phantasmal castle that floated in the skies above Fejiti.

“Now then, as for the castle floating Fejiti… the ‘Melgarius’ Sky Castle’… just what exactly is it, I wonder?”

As before, the Empress of the Alzano Empire – Alicia the seventh – murmured to no one in particular.

From the Translator:
I know that not everyone can buy the book itself due to restrictions on digital services and imports in various countries, but if you can, please support the orginal work!

Digital copies are also available on services such as book-walker and amazon.co.jp from any country that can use paypal/visa/mastercard internationally! If you need any help feel free to email me at re.yun.NS@gmail.com or the comments section of this volume at crimsonmagic.me!

Extra Notes:

Glen's 'Only if I feel like it', is literally translated as 'within my own capacity' or 'as much as I can', which is a more roundabout way for him to say that 'my capacity for work is low'. It was hard to get this subtle sarcasm through in Engllish.

Sistina's "Why are you telling that to this guy!?" is directly translated to "Why are you saying that in front of this guy of all people!?". It's a bit of a weird way to phrase it, considering Lumia was talking to Glen directly.

In the line 'Under the clear skies, the gentle breeze swayed the lady's long hair.', the part written 'under the clear skies' (空が近い) is actually a saying/idiom that literally means 'the sky is close'. It can be interpreted as, 'the sky is so clear that it feels close to oneself'.

Alicia's phrasing of the last question is a bit more playful/rhetorical in terms of tone, ending the question with 'deshoune?' For those curious the entire question is '一体、なんなのでしょうね？'. The 'I wonder?' fits the rhetorical tone, but also uses a pronoun, which does not appear anywhere in her dialogue.